

“IS THERE A MILITARY/CIVILIAN DIVIDE IN AMERICAN CIVIC  
EDUCATION?”

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research addresses the need for further scholarship that studies deeper reasons for the dearth in civic knowledge among youth in the United States. Specifically, the researcher will argue that both family and community education in civics, such as that which comes from being raised within a military community, may prove to be more beneficial for producing civically-minded children than simply relying on the American public education system. This thesis uses the 2014 National Association for Education Progress' civics exam, administered to 9,100 eighth graders in the United States, as a baseline for addressing and comparing American civilian and active-duty military attitudes toward civic education. The data found that, in a brief online survey completed by 45 respondents for this thesis, there are clear delineations in civic attitudes between active-duty military families when compared to civilian families. Further, this study showed that, when the military was broken down by active-duty (or separated within 2 years) and veteran populations, veterans (and their middle-school aged children) reflected the attitudes of civilian respondents more than their active-duty counterparts. These differences may translate to higher civics/government test scores for military-connected students enrolled in U.S. public/private/charter schools. Future research into this "military/civilian divide in civics education" can study whether or not the discipline of active duty military life may impact results, if there are differences in civic attitudes between the different branches of the U.S. military (or among the enlisted or officer populations), or if ethnic/socioeconomic backgrounds of active-duty military may affect outcomes.

## PREFACE

I distinctly remember the day I thought of my thesis topic. While at a baseball game, I felt a sense of immense pride in looking at all four of my children, who were singing along, hands over their hearts, while the singer belted the National Anthem. Then, I kept looking around— some other children were singing, and some were not. I began to wonder whether or not these children knew the words to this patriotic song, or if their parents knew the same. Since then, it has become my passion to understand some of the underlying aspects of civic knowledge, looking specifically to parenting as a key aspect in civic awareness and health.

This thesis is dedicated to my family— to my husband, who has been my confidence and rock; and my children, who were so sweet and patient while I worked toward this educational goal. I would also like to give special mention to my grandmother, from whom I gained my middle name, as her sense of beautiful selflessness, service and strength will forever be the example that I strive for in not only motherhood, but in life. Finally, I would like to thank my professors and advisor, each of whom has taught me so much during my coursework at Johns Hopkins— you will never be forgotten.

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## INTRODUCTION

The importance of civic education, and participation within society, is a theme that many pivotal American leaders stressed. Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, emphasized the importance of civic education starting at home when he said:

“In a republic . . . virtue may be defined as the love of the laws and of our country. As such love requires a constant preference of public to private interest, it is the source of all private virtue. . . . Now a government is like everything else: to preserve it we must love it. Everything, therefore, depends on establishing this love in a republic; and to inspire it ought to be the principal business of education, but the surest way of instilling it into children is for parents to set them an example.”<sup>1</sup>

Abraham Lincoln also believed that civic education needs to begin at home: “Let reverence for the laws, be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap. . .” going on to stress the importance of a political religion that would bond Americans and would therefore prevent any attempts to “subvert our national freedom.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite the historical pleas for civic education by our national leaders, according to a 2014 survey of 9,100 eighth graders by the U.S. Department of Education’s National

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<sup>1</sup>“The Core of Civic Virtue,” Hoover Institution, , accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.hoover.org/research/core-civic-virtue>.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Steven. *The Writings of Abraham Lincoln: Rethinking the Western Tradition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. Page 11.

Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), the civic literacy of American middle schoolers is on life support. The results of this survey showed that only 23 percent of American eighth graders performed at or above proficient level in the 2014 test.<sup>3</sup> Although the NAEP study has shown gains in test scores among Hispanic and White test groups since the study first started in 1998, and two-thirds of the eighth graders surveyed reported civics as being one of their favorite subjects, our national civics aptitude level among American students is still woefully low.<sup>4</sup> This is concerning, as young eighth graders will be voters and will be eligible to serve on juries within five to six years, and will be able to run for public office a few years after they vote in their first election. To take this argument a step further, these eighth graders will also be parents someday. . . how will their children test for civic aptitude and, eventually, decide to implement self-government?<sup>5</sup>

If the recent results of national civics exams among eighth graders are under a level considered proficient, then *why* are those levels so low? Are American educational policies and the methods of current classroom training to blame? Or, are American parents missing out on having important conversations with their children about self-government from home due to their own lack of civic knowledge and confidence? This lack of proficiency among native-born Americans will this follow this youth population into college and beyond, as well, as was found by the Center for the Study of the American

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<sup>3</sup>"New Results Show Eighth-Graders' Knowledge of U.S. History, Geography, and Civics," NAEP - 2014 U.S. History, Geography, and Civics Assessments, , accessed June 24, 2017, [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#summary](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#summary).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Boyd Pitts, Annette. 2016. "Raising the Bar on Civic Education." *Florida Bar Journal* 90, no. 5: 8-16. *Index to Legal Periodicals & Books Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 24, 2017). Page 9.

Dream at Xavier University, where they tested the civic knowledge of native-borns compared to immigrants applying for U.S. citizenship and compared the results to adult American citizens. The results were shocking: 97.5 percent of the immigrants applying for citizenship passed the test, whereas only 30 percent of native-born American adults fared as well.<sup>6</sup>

Are the NAEP and Study of the American Dream test results indicative of a short-term problem, or point to a longer-term epidemic regarding civic illiteracy and/or a lack in overall participation in modern times? According to Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam, in his hailed book, *Bowling Alone*:

“Encouragingly, Americans in the aggregate at century’s end are about as likely to know, for example, which party controls the House of Representatives or who their senators are as were their grandparents a half century ago. On the other hand, we are much better educated than our grandparents, and since civics knowledge is boosted by formal education, it is surprising that civics knowledge has not improved accordingly. The average college graduate today knows little more about public affairs than did the average high school graduate in the 1940’s.”<sup>7</sup>

This thesis will address the need for further scholarship that studies deeper reasons for a dearth in civic knowledge among youth in the United States, and will argue that both family and community education in civics, such as that which comes from being raised within a military community, may prove to be more beneficial for producing civically-minded children than simply relying on the American public education system. Further, this research will argue that the modern American education approach of “teaching to the test,” or focusing on testing children on governmental facts in a similar manner to

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<sup>6</sup> Boyd Pitts, Annette. 2016. "Raising the Bar on Civic Education." *Florida Bar Journal* 90, no. 5: 8-16. *Index to Legal Periodicals & Books Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 24, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Shuster Press, 2000. Page 35.



how new citizens have to pass a test in order to become American citizens, misses the mark because this methodology does not emphasize the importance of involvement in government.

Specifically, this research will address the following questions:

- 1.) What is civics, why is it important, and what is our current status of civic aptitude in the United States? Is there really a problem with respect to civic education in the United States of America during modern times? Finally, where is current national education policy with respect to civic education?
- 2.) What are the commonly-held perceptions and attitudes regarding civic education among parents of American students in modern times?
- 3.) Could the U.S. military community, with its internal sense of rules and traditions that are taught throughout the course of a person's military service, have a corollary effect on how military parents teach their children at home about the importance of government? Could it be likely that civics test scores, on standardized tests like those administered by NAEP, may be positively affected by the impact of military parentage on military-connected students?
- 4.) Can we look to schools like the heavily military Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) schools, as a living example of this "military/civilian divide" in civic education?

Answering these questions will help readers better understand some reasons behind the low civics test scores among students in the United States, and will argue that further scholarship with respect to how positive examples of civic behavior can benefit

civic awareness in American children. After exhaustive research, it has become clear that scholarship with respect to civics education has not approached from the perspective of understanding how a voluntary lifestyle, like the military, that promotes civic voluntarism and participation, may affect children's test scores in that same subject area. By better understanding the "bigger picture" with respect to a modern American culture that results in a lower-than-desired number of eighth graders being proficient in their civic education, we can better approach ways to raise not only civics test scores, but to also produce civically-minded citizens into future generations.

The scope of this review is limited, seeking to challenge the current methodology as to why so many youth within the United States are scoring below the twenty-fifth percentile on civics exams. The primary purpose of this paper is to ascertain whether or not there may be compelling evidence that certain American communities, namely the military community, tend to place a greater emphasis on civic education with their children when compared to their civilian parent counterparts. Finally, this thesis seeks to develop approach-based lessons that can be drawn from the military community and applied to civic education policy in an attempt to improve not only civics test scores, but general civic-based aptitudes, into the future.

## CHAPTER 1

### CURRENT TRENDS AND POLICIES REGARDING AMERICAN CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION

American attitudes toward civic participation have fluctuated greatly since the mid-twentieth century. In his watershed work, *Bowling Alone*, sociologist Robert Putnam noted that, in 1960, 62.8 percent of Americans turned out to cast their votes for either John F. Kennedy or Richard Nixon.<sup>8</sup> In 1996, the number of voting Americans who went to the polls dropped to 48.9 percent.<sup>9</sup> During the early 2000's, voter turnout has increased slightly, but still hovers around sixty percent: in 2000, 51.2 percent of eligible Americans voted on Election Day, and in 2008, 58.2 percent of the voting eligible population within the United States voted.<sup>10</sup> In 2016, the number increased to 60.2 percent— the highest voter turnout in the past half-century.<sup>11</sup>

Does the fluctuation in voting rates among the voting eligible population translate to other forms of civic participation and overall civic awareness? According to authors like Quentin Kidd, who wrote the 2011 book *Civic Participation in America*, citizens of the United States may have varied motives for either participating in, or abstaining from,

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<sup>8</sup> Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone*, Page 32.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> "Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections." The American Presidency Project. Accessed June 23, 2018. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/turnout.php>.

<sup>11</sup> "2016 November General Election Turnout Rates." United States Elections Project. Accessed June 23, 2018. <http://www.electproject.org/2016g>.

Also: Wilson, Reid. "New Report Finds That Voter Turnout in 2016 Topped 2012." TheHill. March 16, 2017. Accessed June 23, 2018. <http://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/324206-new-report-finds-that-voter-turnout-in-2016-topped-2012>.

civically-driven activities. Some citizens may believe that participation in activities, such as voting, may aid in protecting their own self-interests, and others may feel drawn to participation due to a sense of responsibility or duty.<sup>12</sup> According to scholars such as Kidd, the self-interest motivation is an important one, as strong historical figures, such as James Madison, who argued in *Federalist 10* that governments have to be structured to be able to mediate and temper the passions of the individuals who make up the electorate (which Madison called factions).<sup>13</sup> Twentieth century scholar Harold Lasswell has also famously described politics as “who gets what, when, and how,” illustrating a concept that Kidd articulated as “the idea that politics is, at its root, about private conflicts that have come to involve the wider public.”<sup>14</sup>

The nuances between personal interests in civic functions, contrasted against the responsibility to participate, can greatly impact civic engagement. A Pew Research survey, entitled “2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation,” sampled 2,232 Americans (aged 15 and older) and found that 53 percent of those polled agreed with the statement “It is my CHOICE to get involved to make things better or society,” compared to the 40 percent of respondents who agreed with the statement “It is my RESPONSIBILITY to get involved to make things better for society.”<sup>15</sup> Understanding the desires behind what impels American citizens to vote is important, as they can impact not only this nation’s

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<sup>12</sup> Kidd, Quentin. *Civic Participation in America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Accessed June 23, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central. Pages 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Page 5.

<sup>14</sup> Kidd, Quentin. *Civic Participation in America*. Page 6.

<sup>15</sup> Kidd, Quentin. *Civic Participation in America*. Page 9.

political health and voter turnout, but also its overall civic health and sense of social capital.<sup>16</sup> Social capital allows citizens to work together to achieve ends, achieving what Robert Putnam relates to “networks and social norms of reciprocity” that are “generally good for those inside the network.”<sup>17</sup> Although Putnam was aware of the potential for negative impact when social networks work toward malevolent, anti-social, goals, this research will focus on the more positive social capital goals of allowing people to work together to solve collective problems, and allowing communities to advance smoothly through positive interactions with fellow citizens.<sup>18</sup>

## **CIVIC LITERACY VS. CITIZENSHIP-BASED KNOWLEDGE**

The problem of declining civic involvement may not be an isolated issue, but rather the symptom of greater social *and* educational change and accepted norms within this nation. Putnam’s work analyzed other potential concepts that may have impacted civic health in the modern era, such as agreement rates among Americans about the importance of families sitting down for dinner together, in an attempt to understand the status of social interaction in the United States, and to remind citizens about importance of participation and interaction in both private, and public, life. According to Putnam, as attendance at town halls, bowling leagues, and churches started to fall in the latter part of

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<sup>16</sup> Kidd, Quentin. *Civic Participation in America*. Page 11

<sup>17</sup> Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone*. Page 21.

<sup>18</sup> Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone*. Page 288.

the twentieth century, so did American's overall trust in their government.<sup>19</sup> If Putnam's assertion were to be considered true, then how can civic dis-engagement be mitigated, or possibly even reversed, in an era that has arguably grown to be accustomed to individualism? Further, if this were to be the case, could the converse, where words "serve" and "work" are part of a community's core values, result in a greater desire for participation, or (in the case of this research) better civics scores?

The late Earnest Boyer, former United States Commissioner of Education from 1977-1979, argued that "the Jeffersonian vision of grass roots democracy fueled by education increasingly is viewed as utopian, and what's especially disturbing is that the school reform movement of the 1980s has paid insufficient attention to educating students about the nation's history and institutions."<sup>20</sup> Boyer then went on to argue that a theory related to civic involvement, civic education, is not just about learning facts and histories, but should also be about reminding youth about their importance within American greater culture, stating that "civic education, by its very nature, means helping students confront social and ethical concerns and applying what they have learned. . ." and that adults (parents, teachers, or other members of the community) ". . . must help them [students] to understand that not all choices are equally valid."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Morrow, Elizabeth, and Lindsay Scorgie-Porter. *Bowling Alone*, Macat International Limited, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jhu/detail.action?docID=4906605>. Page 10.

<sup>20</sup> Marciano, John. *Civic Illiteracy and Education: Battle for the Hearts and Minds of American Youth*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997. Page 10.

<sup>21</sup> Marciano, John. *Civic Illiteracy and Education: Battle for the Hearts and Minds of American Youth*. Page 11.

What Boyer and Putnam describe is not fact-based civic knowledge, but rather the social acceptance and understanding that participation is a vital part of ensuring the preservation of the American union. This term is known as *civic literacy*. Civic literacy is defined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as:

“. . .knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to work effectively in a diverse society to create more just and equitable workplaces, communities and social institutions.”<sup>22</sup>

Civic literacy is even more crucial in this time of fast-paced technology than at any point in history, according to Boyer, as civic literacy reminds citizens that there is a “larger reality beyond the present,” allowing for members of a society to remember that there is a “sense of continuity with the past [that] can provide a kind of lifeline across the scary chasm of our contemporary situation.”<sup>23</sup> Put simply, civic literacy bridges the gaps in Quentin Kidd’s theories regarding responsibility and choice: it helps citizens to know that participation in government is important (a responsibility), encouraging them to make positive choices with respect to their civic behaviors. Knowledge about American heritage that emphasizes the people, ideas and issues that have shaped our nation can help our youth to not only understand our past, but can help to successfully navigate our nation’s future through stronger understanding of the commitments necessary to maintain a healthy republic.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Civic Literacy across the Curriculum." Association of American Colleges & Universities. December 29, 2014. Accessed July 08, 2018. <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/civic-literacy-across-curriculum>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> "Civic Literacy across the Curriculum." Association of American Colleges & Universities. December 29, 2014. Accessed July 08, 2018. <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/civic-literacy-across-curriculum>.

Modern civic education, however, seems to fall short in teaching the ideals associated with civic literacy, focusing instead on more measurable civics-based knowledge, or citizenship knowledge. Civic literacy teaches students (still very important) concepts that are more consistent to the facts that must be learned before an immigrant can take a citizenship test. While the next sections addresses the current approaches in brick-and-mortar classrooms with respect to civic education in light of current education policies, it is important to note that this thesis will assume that civic literacy is a necessary primer for citizenship knowledge, as civic literacy gives a “why” to the knowledge-based “what” of citizenship knowledge.

## **WHY IS CIVIC EDUCATION IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER?**

America’s founding fathers believed that a strong public education system in America should teach our youth how to become active participants in self-government. This education was to be taught with a hands-on approach, by encouraging personal research and education on topics of importance, thereby developing critical thinking skills and debate skills.<sup>25</sup> Both civic literacy and citizenship knowledge, according to American founding philosophies, are critical in creating a connection between the individual citizen and American ideals and aspirations of concepts like liberty and equality, helping the

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<sup>25</sup> "Forgotten Purpose: Civics Education in Public Schools." NEA Today. March 21, 2017. Accessed June 10, 2018. <http://neatoday.org/2017/03/16/civics-education-public-schools/>.



electorate to not only understand American successes, but how to question and think critically about our national failures, as well.<sup>26</sup>

Civic education should be a concern for American parents, educators, and policymakers, as informed citizens are needed in order to maintain a healthy democracy. Simply stated, if the American public is not interested protecting their nation's philosophical principles as outlined in foundational documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, the constitutional federal republic of the United States cannot succeed.<sup>27</sup>

If civic education is not inherited, but must be taught, then what should scholars think about the low national scores on the NAEP civics exams? While education is of obvious importance, there are competing theories on why people consider civics to be essential to a healthy citizenry. Some have argued that self-interest has always been the motivating factor for citizens to become involved in the public square while others believe that an ingrained sense of virtue spurs citizens into action. Alexis de Tocqueville, in his famous work, *Democracy in America*, related civics to "fulfilling one's duty." Citizens often act of what he called "self-interest properly understood" finding that private interests and public civic duties often coincide to further both personal *and* public aims. In Tocqueville's words: "of the interest of men to be useful to their fellows. . . What has been calculation becomes instinct".<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Marciano, John. *Civic Illiteracy and Education: Battle for the Hearts and Minds of American Youth*. Page 17.

<sup>27</sup> Branson, Margaret Stimmann. "The Role of Civic Education: A Forthcoming Education Policy Task Force from the Communitarian Network. Center for Civic Education, September 1998. Accessed 19 July 2017. [http://civiced.org/papers/articles\\_role.html](http://civiced.org/papers/articles_role.html)

<sup>28</sup> Campbell, David. *Why We Vote*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Page 2.

David Campbell, in his book *Why We Vote*, stated:

The distinction between engagement driven by interests versus duty need not be seen as an either/or situation. The very fact that evidence can be mustered to support both interpretations of the founders' ideals suggests that neither one dominated to the exclusion of the other. Nor should we assume that the essential difference between engagement spurred by a threat to one's interests and engagement motivated by a sense of civic obligation has faded over time.<sup>29</sup>

While studies have shown that a large majority of American adults believe that schools should be "preparing students to be responsible citizens", and deemed that endeavor as being "very important" to the purpose of American education, the resulting low test scores of American students on tests, like NAEP's, leaves many scholars scratching their heads.<sup>30</sup>

What is the role of schools in educating children in the United States about civics? Campbell argues that there are two formal aspects of educating youth in modern America: formal curriculum and practical experience, which prepares them for membership larger communities.<sup>31</sup> According to Alex Lin, in a 2015 article entitled "Citizenship Education in American Schools and its Role in Developing Civic Engagement: a Review of the Research," defines citizenship education as:

1. Citizenship education refers to instructional practices, representing a variety of learning activities, which promote democratic thinking.
2. Citizenship education involves role play, such as debate, where youth can critically engage and understand abstract concepts of democracy.
3. Citizenship education can include service learning programs where youth

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<sup>29</sup> Campbell, David. *Why We Vote*. Page 3.

<sup>30</sup> Campbell, *Why We Vote*, Page 151.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

address community needs though design and implementation of a service project.<sup>32</sup>

Formal civics curriculum has been under scrutiny for many years, with educators and policy makers trying to figure out how to better link civic courses with a higher sense of civic literacy. In the 1960's and '70's, the empirical study of civics had high hopes; however, "little evidence was uncovered that civics instruction has any bearing on civic attitudes and/or behavior in either the short *or* long term."<sup>33</sup> Study after study, including the Youth-Parent Socialization Study (YPSS), which began in 1965, conducted a series of representative national interviews with both high school seniors and their parents, coming to the conclusion that high school civics classes had little to no impact on the civic orientations of American teenagers.<sup>34</sup>

While much scholarship has been dedicated to "cracking the code" of civic education in American schools, it may be wise to challenge researchers to consider looking outside classroom walls, emphasizing the need for civic literacy to be supported within the walls of homes. According to a 2015 article released by Gallup, approximately 7 in

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<sup>32</sup> "How to Teach Kids About Civic Engagement." Psychology Today. Accessed June 10, 2018. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/you-empowered/201712/how-teach-kids-about-civic-engagement>.

Also: Lin, Alex. 2015. "Citizenship education in American schools and its role in developing civic engagement: a review of the research." *Educational Review* 67, no. 1: 35-63. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 10, 2018).

<sup>33</sup>"How to Teach Kids About Civic Engagement." Psychology Today. Accessed June 10, 2018. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/you-empowered/201712/how-teach-kids-about-civic-engagement>.

Also: Lin, Alex. 2015. "Citizenship education in American schools and its role in developing civic engagement: a review of the research." *Educational Review* 67, no. 1: 35-63. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 10, 2018).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

10 of American teens (aged 13-17) plan to vote about the same way as their parents.<sup>35</sup> According to the article, “Parents’ Influence of Youth Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment,” by Diann Cameron Kelley, “Parents not only introduce growing children to society and articulate the cultural norms and expectations of our society within the caregiving environment but also serve as protective agents, providing information, learning opportunities, and social–financial resources that promote healthy development and prosocial behaviors of youths into early adulthood.”<sup>36</sup>

According to a study conducted for the purposes of the Kelley article, the link between civic and voting participation with American parents and the civic behaviors of their children is strong— when studying white youth, the Kelley study found that white youth whose parents voted in nearly every election are 3.273 times more likely to value voting when compared to white children whose parents did not.<sup>37</sup> Further, the Kelley study found that those same white students whose parents voted in most every election were 2.5 times more likely to volunteer or perform service in the one year before the study than those whose parents didn’t vote.<sup>38</sup> While the Kelley study was exploratory in nature, it did cause the reader to consider the nature of parent/child communication and

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<sup>35</sup> Gallup, Inc. "Teens Stay True to Parents' Political Perspectives." Gallup.com. January 04, 2005. Accessed August 07, 2017. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/14515/teens-stay-true-parents-political-perspectives.aspx>.

<sup>36</sup> “Parents' Influence on Youths' Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment.” *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*: 2006, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 447-455. Page 447.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, page 452.

<sup>38</sup> “Parents' Influence on Youths' Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment.” *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*: 2006, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 447-455. Page 452.

education, especially with respect to civic engagement and literacy.<sup>39</sup> If youth feel empowered by having their parents set a positive example of civic virtue, helping them believe that they are contributing members of their community and society, as well as improve their social condition and can affect self-governance, then it may be argued that this empowerment could result in a reciprocal increase in civics test scores among American youth.

Even though it may not be possible to fully blame the low national civic test scores with low political knowledge and participation by parents, there may be certain links that may suggest that parental involvement in activities that increase civic participation or awareness could result in their children becoming more civically-educated.<sup>40</sup> This same ideology of parents (and often, being part of a larger, engaged, community) being a strong indicator of a child's civic engagement (and possibly even civic education) was reviewed in Robert D. Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone*, where Putnam argued that considerable research has demonstrated that family, school groups and community dynamics can have a large impact on a child's social behaviors and development.<sup>41</sup>

While public schools take on much of the national education of youth, it is a logical conclusion that children of civically-active adults will perform better in civics classes, due to a heightened sense of civic literacy and pride in our American republic. Therefore, this research suggests that NAEP's study is inadequate in that it does not study how the

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<sup>39</sup> "Parents' Influence on Youths' Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment." *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, Page 453.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, Page 454.

<sup>41</sup> Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of the American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster Press, 2000. Page 296.

civic attitudes of parents of these same middle schoolers may have an impact on the civic test scores of their children, as the NAEP data only studies the educational levels, and the students' ethnicities, gender, and type/location of school.<sup>42</sup>

## **THE CURRENT STATUS OF CIVICS WITHIN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (AND FUTURE RESEARCH TO BE CONSIDERED)**

Education policy can directly affect the educational focus of American students. According to a 2016 survey by the Center for American Progress, 40 out of the 50 states require civic education as part of their high school curricula, and only 17 states require students to pass a civics exam as a requirement for education.<sup>43</sup> The most influential educational policy, from where current legislation has stemmed, was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was passed 1965 as part of Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty Campaign.<sup>44</sup> According to the State of Washington's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "ESEA authorizes state-run programs for eligible schools and districts eager to raise the academic achievement of struggling learners and

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<sup>42</sup> "New Results Show Eighth-Graders' Knowledge of U.S. History, Geography, and Civics." NAEP 2009 High School Transcript Study: Gender, Grade Point Average. Accessed July 08, 2018. [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#civics/groups](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#civics/groups).

<sup>43</sup> Shapiro, Sarah, and Catherine Brown. "The State of Civics Education." Center for American Progress. Accessed June 11, 2018. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/02/21/446857/state-civics-education/>.

<sup>44</sup> "The ABC's of ESEA, ESSA and No Child Left Behind." Education Post. Accessed August 09, 2017. <http://educationpost.org/the-abcs-of-esea-essa-and-no-child-left-behind/>.

address the complex challenges that arise for students who live with disability, mobility problems, learning difficulties, poverty, or transience, or who need to learn English.”<sup>45</sup>

Since ESEA introduced the largest source of federal funding nationwide for elementary and secondary education, states and districts had to become more accountable in meeting the needs and goals of their students.<sup>46</sup> ESEA has been reauthorized eight times since 1965, with each major change carrying updates to federal requirements.<sup>47</sup> The historical focus on ESEA, and its reauthorizations, has been on the sciences, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects, helping American students to stay internationally competitive in the job market.<sup>48</sup> While civic and democratic aims have been the traditional goals of public schooling in America, recent policies have shown an increased emphasis on classroom time going toward content geared toward reading and the science, technology, engineering and math (or, STEM) subjects, resulting in 71 percent of American schools cutting back on time in the classroom that would have otherwise gone to the arts, and social studies, such as civics.<sup>49</sup>

Standardized testing of students has become a common way to ensure that Federal requirements and expectations within ESEA are being met by school, districts, and states,

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<sup>45</sup> "No Child Left Behind Act." Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. June 29, 2017. Accessed August 09, 2017. <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/>.

<sup>46</sup> "The ABC's of ESEA, ESSA and No Child Left Behind." Education Post. Accessed August 09, 2017. <http://educationpost.org/the-abcs-of-esea-essa-and-no-child-left-behind/>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "Science, Technology, Engineering and Math: Education for Global Leadership." Science, Technology, Engineering and Math: Education for Global Leadership | U.S. Department of Education. Accessed August 10, 2017. <https://www.ed.gov/stem>.

<sup>49</sup> Kahne, Joseph E., and Susan E. Sporte. "Developing Citizens: The Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students' Commitment to Civic Participation." August 2017. Accessed December 2, 2017.

therefore helping the Federal government ensure that “African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, English-language learners, students with disabilities and many others were being left out or left behind because schools were not held accountable for their individual progress and growth.”<sup>50</sup>

Federal requirements and expectations in ESEA provide transparency and oversight on states and districts to ensure that there are protections for these vulnerable students, schools, and communities. This provides and targets additional services and support they need to succeed.<sup>51</sup>

In 2002, during the President George W. Bush’s administration, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed to comprehensively reauthorize ESEA. NCLB increased the federal role of in holding schools accountable for student outcomes, and was born out of concern that U.S. schools were becoming less internationally competitive.<sup>52</sup> The two subjects that NCLB focused on was math and reading, for fourth and eighth graders (every two years), and used tests generated from the National Association for Education Progress (NAEP), beginning in the 2002-03 school year.<sup>53</sup>

Why tests from NAEP? The U.S. Department of Education stated, on their website:

Since 1969, NAEP has been the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what American students know and can do in major academic subjects. Over the years NAEP has measured students' achievement in many subjects, including reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, civics, geography and the arts. Since 1992, the current NAEP reading assessment has been given in four

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<sup>50</sup> “The ABC’s of ESEA, ESSA, and No Child Left Behind.” Education Post.

<sup>51</sup> “The ABC’s of ESEA, ESSA, and No Child Left Behind.” Education Post.

<sup>52</sup> Klein, Alyson. "No Child Left Behind Overview: Definitions, Requirements, Criticisms, and More." Education Week. April 10, 2017. Accessed August 09, 2017. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html>.

<sup>53</sup> "Testing: Frequently Asked Questions." Home. October 13, 2012. Accessed August 09, 2017. <https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/ayp/testing-faq.html>.



different years (1992, 1994, 1998 and 2000) to a nationally representative sample of fourth-grade students. NAEP provides a wealth of data about the condition of education in the United States.<sup>54</sup>

According to many reports, and scholarship, the increased focus on math and science under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) caused a reciprocal focus on Test-Based Analysis (TBA) in American public schools.<sup>55</sup> “NCLB transformed TBA into a national strategy, placed a clear goal on student achievement as reflected on certain standardized tests, and established a series of actions and penalties for failure to meet annual improvement goals on those tests (meaning school closures in some cases). More than 70 percent of the American public favors renewal of federal accountability legislation, and performance on similar tests is known to relate to important economic outcomes.”<sup>56</sup> States were left to develop and enforce their own testing standards in order to help their students reach a level of proficient or higher level of achievement in reading, math, and science by the end of the 2013-2014 school year.<sup>57</sup>

NCLB has been very controversial since its inception. Critics charge that NCLB has led educators to shift resources away from important non-tested subjects, such as social studies, art, and music and to and to focus instruction within mathematics and reading on the relatively narrow set of topics that are most heavily represented on the high-stakes tests.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "Testing: Frequently Asked Questions." Home. October 13, 2012. Accessed August 09, 2017. <https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/ayp/testing-faq.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Hanushek, Eric . "Building on No Child Left Behind." *Science Magazine* 326 (November 6 , 2009): 802-03. Accessed July 21, 2017. <https://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/hanushek%202009%20Science%20326.pdf>. Page 802.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Skinner, Rebecca. *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as Amended by the No Child Left Behind Act: A Primer* (CRS Report Number RL33960). (Washington, D.C, Congressional Research Service, 2010). Page: Summary.

<sup>58</sup> Dee, Thomas S., and Brian A. Jacob. "The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Students, Teachers and Schools." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* Fall 2010:149-207. Accessed

Thomas Dee and Brian Jacob studied the impact of NCLB on American schools in their article “The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Students, Teachers and Schools”, published in 2010. In it, they analyzed data on American student trends, from 1992-2007 by grade (fourth and eighth), subject (math and reading) and by ethnicity (white, black and Hispanic).<sup>59</sup> While their article is exhaustive and quantitative in focus regarding the subjects of mathematics and reading, it does not address the comparative difference in scores among Americans with respect to subjects like civics, which were largely ignored by NCLB. For the purposes of this review, comparative research (minus the years 1992-1995) was found via NAEP’s website. According to NAEP, as pointed out in Dee and Jacob’s article, long-term trends for fourth-grade mathematics (1992-2007) suggests a national improvement in math scores for fourth graders during the period of time during the time of No Child Left Behind Act enactment.<sup>60</sup> When compared to 1998-2006 assessments of American eighth graders by NAEP with respect to civics, there was no comparative change in score; only about 22 percent of American eighth graders scored proficient

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July 21, 2017. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010b\\_bpea\\_dee.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010b_bpea_dee.pdf). Page 150.

<sup>59</sup> Dee, Thomas S., and Brian A. Jacob. "The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Students, Teachers and Schools.", Page 155.

<sup>60</sup> Dee, Thomas S., and Brian A. Jacob. "The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Students, Teachers and Schools." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* Fall 2010:149-207. Accessed July 21, 2017. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010b\\_bpea\\_dee.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2010b_bpea_dee.pdf). Page 155-156

or higher.<sup>61</sup> In 2014, the percentage of American eighth graders who scored proficient in civics raised one percentage point, to twenty-three percent.<sup>62</sup>

Even though NCLB focused on the advancement of national mathematics, science and reading scores, it was also found to be problematic in implementation, causing teachers to “teach to the test,” or focus on short-term goals, instead helping schools and educators to meet long-term goals.<sup>63</sup> The “teach to the test” concept is commonly related to the major subjects of STEM and reading, it can be argued that the same classroom teaching tactics have also become applied to civics and other social studies. On December 2, 2015, Congress agreed to the conference report on the most recent update to ESEA- the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).<sup>64</sup>

ESSA was passed into law on December 10, 2015, and “rolls back much of the federal government's big footprint in education policy, on everything from testing and teacher quality to low-performing schools. And it gives new leeway to states in calling the shots.”<sup>65</sup> ESSA not only updated, but replaced, NCLB, and took effect during the

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<sup>61</sup> "The Nation's Report Card: Civics 2006." The Nation's Report Card: Civics 2006: Executive Summary. Accessed July 21, 2017.

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2006/2007476.asp>.

<sup>62</sup>"New Results Show Eighth-Graders' Knowledge of U.S. History, Geography, and Civics." NAEP - 2014 U.S. History, Geography, and Civics Assessments. Accessed July 21, 2017.

[https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#civics/contexts](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#civics/contexts).

<sup>63</sup> Dee, Thomas S., and Brian A. Jacob. "The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Students, Teachers and Schools." Page 179.

<sup>64</sup> Skinner, Rebecca. “The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and ESEA Reauthorization: Summary of Selected Key Issues”. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. Report Number IF10333. December 7, 2015)

<sup>65</sup> Klein, Alyson. "The Every Student Succeeds Act: An ESSA Overview." Education Week. June 20, 2017. Accessed August 09, 2017. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/every-student-succeeds-act/index.html>.

2017/18 school year.<sup>66</sup> While states must still test students in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 (and divide students into “subgroups,” such as racial minorities, those in poverty, and special-education students and students who speak English as a second language), individual states can now create their own “opt-out” laws, and decide consequences for schools that fall short on targets.<sup>67</sup> States can also choose their own standards, which may or may not include the national Common Core curriculum.<sup>68</sup>

According to the Congressional Research Service, under ESSA:

States would be required to establish long-term goals, including measures for performance on the reading and mathematics assessments, high school graduation rates, and the percentage of English learners achieving English language proficiency. States would be then required to annually measure the performance of all students and each subgroup of students in schools based on the aforementioned measures and at least one other measure for elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools and at least one indicator of school quality on student success.<sup>69</sup>

ESSA still focuses on reading and math; however, it also offers block grants for the areas of this research topic: American civics. Title II, Part B, offers “a competitive block grant for non-profit organizations to develop and disseminate innovative approaches to offering high-quality instructions in American history, civics, government and geography for under-served students.”<sup>70</sup> Further, ESSA also encourages nonprofits to

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<sup>66</sup>Klein, Alyson. "The Every Student Succeeds Act: An ESSA Overview."

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Klein, Alyson. "The Every Student Succeeds Act: An ESSA Overview." Education Week. June 20, 2017. Accessed August 09, 2017. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/every-student-succeeds-act/index.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Skinner, Rebecca. “The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and ESEA Reauthorization: Summary of Selected Key Issues”. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. Report Number IF10333. December 7, 2015).

<sup>70</sup> "THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) Funding for Civics, History, Economics, and Geography." CRFC.org. February 2016. Accessed August 10, 2017.

develop two- to six-week long programs or academies in these same subject areas, encourages innovation with respect to subjects such as civics, and encourages districts to use the money to develop a “well-rounded” education (that will likely include civics).<sup>71</sup>

One of the most important elements of ESSA for military-connected students particularly interesting to study is the fact that new transparency laws will require states and districts to provide data, including test scores and graduation rates, regarding vulnerable groups of students, which will include military-connected students.<sup>72</sup> In effect, a military-connected subgroup has been created for data collection and future research purposes. This information will be assessed by assigning military-connected students a ‘military student identifier’ number. “This change comes in response to concerns raised by the U.S Department of Defense that the children of active-duty members of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, and Marines have academic and emotional needs that schools are ill-equipped to meet”.<sup>73</sup>

While Chapter 3 will address the military community more in-depth, it is important to note that future years will likely find more scholars studying military-connected students than ever before, thanks to the new military student identification number under ESSA. While this research does not include any data that has been collected since the advent of the military-connected identifier number has been established, this research will suggest some likely outcomes based on comparative research completed during the

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<sup>71</sup> "THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) Funding for Civics, History, Economics, and Geography." CRFC.org. February 2016. Accessed August 10, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Adams, Jane Meredith. 2016. "Military Students to Get Additional Supports Under ESSA." *Education Week* 35, no. 34: 21. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed August 5, 2017).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

development of this thesis. Further, the research completed on behalf of this thesis will ask questions to both parents and children of American middle-school students in an attempt to better understand the developmental connection between parent and child interactions when it comes to civics, and will seek to establish whether or not military service by parents may suggest a higher aptitude of civic awareness among military-connected students when compared to their civilian counterparts.

## CHAPTER 2

# AMERICAN ATTITUDES ABOUT CIVIC EDUCATION AND POSSIBLE PARENTAL LINKS TO CIVIC BEHAVIORS

Immediately following the presidential election of 2016, social media sites like Facebook were abuzz with confusion. The success of Donald J. Trump in becoming the soon-to-be 45th President of the United States thanks to his Electoral College votes caused quite the stir among the electorate. The Electoral College was suddenly thrown into the limelight of social media speculation, causing many Americans to not only wonder what it was and how it works, but also simultaneously inciting a pitchfork and fire-type pitch by many to abolish the whole Electoral College system. A survey by Vox, completed in the days after the 2016 election, found that 62 percent of those surveyed wanted to abolish the Electoral College system, compared to 38 percent who wanted to keep the Electoral College intact.<sup>74</sup>

What is important to note about the Vox survey, and the renewed attempt to abolish longstanding systems like the Electoral College, is that aside from a cursory explanation of the Electoral College within the question itself, the Vox did not appear to question whether or not the 1,084 survey respondents understood the purpose of the Electoral College in the first place.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Matthews, Dylan. "Poll: Most People Who Voted in 2016 Want to Abolish the Electoral College." Vox. November 24, 2016. Accessed July 01, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/24/13731770/electoral-college-poll>.

<sup>75</sup> Matthews, Dylan. "Poll: Most People Who Voted in 2016 Want to Abolish the Electoral College." Vox. November 24, 2016. Accessed July 01, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/24/13731770/electoral-college-poll>.

## RECENT POLLS AND CURRENT RESEARCH

Recent polls have found that American adults are about as educated about civics (with both civic literacy and citizenship-inspired knowledge) as their children. A 2016 poll by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania found that only a quarter of Americans could name all three branches of their federal government, and a third surveyed could not even name one branch of government.<sup>76</sup> Further, just weeks after the presidential debates of 2016, only 84 percent of those surveyed could name the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, and most could not name either vice presidential candidate: only 34 percent could name Republican candidate Mike Pence, and 22 percent could name Democratic candidate Tim Kaine.<sup>77</sup> Further, when asked about whether or not they trusted their government, only 18 percent of Americans answered in the affirmative.<sup>78</sup>

This trend toward failure in civic knowledge is something that social scientists and policy makers should pay close attention to, due to the short- and long-term impacts that this direction may have on the future of the voting public. American adults are now raising the next generation of leaders, voters, and decision-makers, and the lack of

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<sup>76</sup> "Americans' Knowledge of the Branches of Government Is Declining." Cision PR Newswire. September 13, 2016. Accessed July 1, 2018. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining-300325968.html>.

<sup>77</sup> "Americans' Knowledge of the Branches of Government Is Declining." Cision PR Newswire. September 13, 2016. Accessed July 1, 2018. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining-300325968.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Shapiro, Sarah, and Brown, Catherine. "The State of Civic Education." Center for American Progress. Accessed 11 June 2018. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/02/21/446857/state-civics-education>



knowledge on the parents' parts may have an impact on the overall understanding of government on their children. Further, other scholars have noted that the American adults are now dividing themselves into more ideologically and politically groups than they have in the past, allowing the gap between the politically knowledgeable and connected "haves" and "have nots" to be getting wider.<sup>79</sup>

For the purposes of developing further scholarship, the researcher of this thesis conducted a small study that sought to understand the current attitudes of Americans regarding the importance of civic education among American youth. In developing the questions, the parents of middle schoolers were determined as a sufficient test group in an attempt to determine whether or not American parents tend to think that civic education is an important component of their child's education between the dates of June 21-27, 2018. This test group was determined to be a comparable group when compared to the NAEP 2014 civics exam, as that test was administered to American 8th graders. Despite the fact that the NAEP civics exam did not test the civic knowledge of the parents of the 8th graders, this thesis attempts to find a link between parental attitudes toward civics and the scores of the children who will be tested for similar exams in the future.

When asked the question "How important do you consider civic education to be with respect to your child's education," the 44 of the total 45 respondents answered the optional question with:

Answer Choices	Responses	Total responses
Very unimportant	13.64%	6
Somewhat important	2.27%	1

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<sup>79</sup> Hansen, Mark. "Flunking Civics: Why America's Kids Know So Little." ABA Journal. Accessed July 01, 2018. [http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/civics?icn=most\\_read](http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/civics?icn=most_read).

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Total responses</b>
Neither unimportant nor important	0.00%	0
Somewhat important	27.27%	12
Very important	56.82%	24
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>44</b>

The results of this short survey, comprised of mostly married (93.18 percent) and more educated (38 percent of respondents of this survey had a bachelor’s degree listed as their highest level of education attained, a bit higher when compared to the national average of about 30 percent) respondents will be addressed throughout this thesis. This survey comprised of two aspects: one for the parents, and a second set of questions for the middle-school aged children of the respondents. The respondents were anonymous, and the survey was shared primarily via social media (Facebook and Twitter). Further, the respondents understood that this survey was being conducted in a manner that will help researchers understand the civic intensity of American parents of middle schoolers; however, the respondents were not aware that some of their answers would allow further extrapolation of comparative data, allowing a comparison of information between three sub-populations that will be compared throughout later parts of this paper: civilian, active-duty military, and veteran military (referred to as veteran) parents of middle schoolers.

## CIVICS AND PARENTING

Why should further scholarship be dedicated to studying civics scores among American youth, and why should more research be conducted that focuses on the impact of parenting on this subject? Former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor perhaps said it best: "The better educated our citizen are, the better equipped they will be to preserve the system of government we have. Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do. We have neglected civic education for the past few decades, and the results are predictably dismal."<sup>80</sup> Civic education should be a concern for American parents, educators, and policymakers as we need informed citizens to maintain a healthy democracy. Without a citizenry who are interested in protecting our American principles, our government cannot succeed.<sup>81</sup>

If civic education is not inherited, but must be taught, what are educators, parents and policymakers to think of these low national scores on the NAEP civics exams? Can they, as an education subset, do a better job in teaching our children the importance of civic virtue and participation? What motivates people to be civically involved? While education is of obvious importance, there are competing theories on why people consider civics to be essential to a healthy citizenry. Some scholars have argued that self-interest

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<sup>80</sup> "The Core of Civic Virtue," Hoover Institution, accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.hoover.org/research/core-civic-virtue>.

<sup>81</sup> Branson, Margaret Stimmann. "The Role of Civic Education: A Forthcoming Education Policy Task Force from the Communitarian Network. Center for Civic Education, September 1998. Accessed 19 July 2017. [http://civiced.org/papers/articles\\_role.html](http://civiced.org/papers/articles_role.html)

has always been the motivating factor for citizens to become involved in the public square while others believe that an ingrained sense of virtue spurs citizens into action. In *Federalist 10*, James Madison equates political participation as “protecting one’s interests.” Alexis de Tocqueville related civics to “fulfilling one’s duty,” though motivations can be mixed. Citizens often act of what he called “self-interest properly understood” meaning citizens will find that both their interests and civic duty coincide to further personal and public aims. As Tocqueville put it: it is also “of the interest of men to be useful to their fellows. . . What has been calculation becomes instinct”.<sup>82</sup>

Whatever the case, self-interest and virtue do not necessarily have to compete with one another in America. David Campbell, in his book *Why We Vote*, stated:

“These two opposing views of politics are not merely abstract statements of theoreticians, the political science rendition of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. . . The ongoing debate between civic republican and liberal political philosophers over the nature of political life at the time of America’s founding underscores the two competing versions of democracy’s nature. . . The distinction between engagement driven by interests versus duty need not be seen as either/or. The very fact that evidence can be mustered to support both interpretations of the founders’ ideals suggests that neither one dominated to the exclusion of the other. Nor should we assume that the essential difference between engagement spurred by a threat to one’s interests and engagement motivated by a sense of civic obligation has faded over time.”<sup>83</sup>

“There are at least two ways that schools engage in civic education,” Campbell says. “The first, and most overt, method is through formal curriculum. The second is more subtle. Since schools are, in many ways, communities within themselves, they also

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<sup>82</sup> Campbell, David. *Why We Vote*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Page 2.

<sup>83</sup> Campbell, David. *Why We Vote*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Page 3

have the potential to provide their students with practical experience as members of that community, preparing them for membership in other, larger communities.”<sup>84</sup> The formal civics curriculum practiced in American schools has been under scrutiny for many years, with educators and policy makers trying to figure out how to better link civic literacy with citizenship knowledge. In the 1960’s and ’70’s, the empirical study of civics had high hopes; however, “little evidence was uncovered that civics instruction has any bearing on civic attitudes and/or behavior in either the short *or* long term.”<sup>85</sup> Study after study, including the Youth-Parent Socialization Study (YPSS), which began in 1965, conducted a series of representative national interviews with both high school seniors and their parents, came to the conclusion that high school civics classes had little to no impact on the civic orientations of American teenagers.<sup>86</sup>

The traditional data collected with respect to the civic attitudes of Americans (in particular: attitudes of parents of American middle-schoolers) are quite dated at this point, the researcher of this thesis decided to ask the survey respondents questions that would point to a better understanding of current attitudes. When asked “How important do you consider voting during midterm election years to be,” the 45 respondents (again, American parents of middle school students) answered:<sup>87</sup>

Answer Choices	Responses	Total Responses
Very unimportant	8.89%	4
Somewhat unimportant	2.22%	1

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Campbell, David. *Why We Vote*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Page 3.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> The complete survey questions and answers can be found in Appendix C, “Total American Responses.”

Answer Choices	Responses	Total Responses
Neither unimportant nor important	0.00%	0
Somewhat important	31.11%	14
Very important	57.78%	26

Later in the survey, the children of the same respondents were asked “Do you believe voting is a civic responsibility?”:

Answer Choices	Responses	Total Responses
Yes	94.44%	34
No	2.78%	1
Prefer not to answer	2.78%	1

What is interesting about the study conducted for this thesis project is not necessarily relating to the general results of the research, but what happens when certain subgroups, such as active duty military (and spouses) are pulled out as data subsets.

Of the 45 eligible respondents, when asked “How important do you consider voting during midterm election years to be,” the military respondents had different results than their civilian counterparts:

Answer Choices	Responses (Military)	Responses (Civilian)
Very unimportant	0.00%	14.81%
Somewhat unimportant	0.00%	3.70%
Neither unimportant nor important	0.00%	0
Somewhat important	38.46%	22.22%

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses (Military)</b>	<b>Responses (Civilian)</b>
Very important	61.54%	59.26%

How can the differences in results relate to possible civics test scores? As part of the overall civics study conducted for this thesis, the middle-school aged students of the parents polled were asked a few civics-related questions, such as “What famous document starts with ‘We the People. . .’”

The results to this question (“What famous document starts with ‘We the People. . .’”), by total population percentages, were as follows:

<b>Correct answers by population</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>Civilian (non-military) children</b>	25.93%
<b>Active duty military children</b>	44.44%

While much scholarship has been dedicated to “cracking the code” of civic education in American schools, this thesis challenges researchers to consider looking outside classroom walls. Both Putnam, in *Bowling Alone*, and Campbell in *Why We Vote*, stress the importance of community with respect to civic engagement and virtue, which will likely translate to middle school civics test scores. When analyzing the results of the 2010 and 2014 NAEP national surveys, the studies seemed to focus on the impact of how edu-

cators operate within their classrooms, asking parents only what their level of highest education was.<sup>88</sup> According to the survey, “students whose parents graduated from college scored higher on average than those whose parents had some education after high school, who in turn scored higher than those whose parents’ highest level of education was high school.”<sup>89</sup> Greater emphasis was placed on studying the level of education students gained within the context of the classroom, however, asking students to report the civics subjects they covered throughout the school year, and reporting classroom activity methodologies used for teaching/learning civics.<sup>90</sup>

According to a 2015 article released by Gallup, approximately 7 in 10 of American teens (aged 13-17) plan to vote about the same way as their parents.<sup>91</sup> According to the article, “Parents’ Influence of Youth Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment,” by Diann Cameron Kelley,

“Parents not only introduce growing children to society and articulate the cultural norms and expectations of our society within the caregiving environment but also serve as protective agents, providing information, learning opportunities, and social–financial resources that promote healthy development and prosocial behaviors of youths into early adulthood.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>National Center for Education Statistics, Civics 2010: National Assessment of Educational Progress in Grades 4, 8 and 12, U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011, accessed June 24, 2017, <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2010/2011466.pdf>. Page 25.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "New Results Show Eighth-Graders' Knowledge of U.S. History, Geography, and Civics," NAEP - 2014 U.S. History, Geography, and Civics Assessments, accessed June 24, 2017, [https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#civics/contexts](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#civics/contexts).

<sup>91</sup> Gallup, Inc. "Teens Stay True to Parents' Political Perspectives." Gallup.com. January 04, 2005. Accessed August 07, 2017. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/14515/teens-stay-true-parents-political-perspectives.aspx>.

<sup>92</sup> Parents' Influence on Youths' Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment. Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services: 2006, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 447-455. Page 447.



According to a study conducted for the purposes of the Kelley article, the link between civic and voting participation with American parents and the civic behaviors of their children is strong— when studying White youth, the Kelley study found that white youths whose parents voted in nearly every election are 3.273 times more likely to value voting when compared to white children whose parents did not.<sup>93</sup> Further, the Kelley study found that those same white students whose parents voted in most every election were 2.5 times more likely to volunteer or perform service in the one year before the study than those whose parents didn't vote.<sup>94</sup> While the Kelley study was exploratory in nature, it does cause the reader to consider the nature of parent/child communication and education, especially with respect to civic engagement.<sup>95</sup> If youth feel empowered by having their parents set a positive example of civic virtue, helping them believe that they are contributing members of their community and society, as well as improve their social condition and can affect self-governance, then could we see a reciprocal increase in civics test scores among American youth?

It may not be possible to fully tie in civic test scores with civic knowledge, participation and virtue by parents, but we can draw certain links that, upon further exploration, can result in our youth becoming more civically-educated. According to Kelley:

“The choice to engage in civic duty is not intrinsic to human nature but rather is situational. The parent–child relationship offers substantive influence on a child’s beliefs and perceptions of self in society. Thus, parents, as key resources in child

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<sup>93</sup> Parents' Influence on Youths' Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*: 2006, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 447-455. Page 452.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, Page 453.

development, may strongly influence voting patterns and levels of volunteerism in their children as well as social trust and external efficacy.”<sup>96</sup>

This same ideology of parents (and often, being part of a larger, engaged, community) being a strong indicator of a child’s civic engagement (and possibly even civic education) was reviewed in Robert D. Putnam’s book, *Bowling Alone*, where he said “A considerable body of research dating back at least fifty years has demonstrated that trust, networks, and norms of reciprocity within a child’s family, school, peer group and larger community have wider-ranging effects on the child’s opportunities and choices and, hence, on his behavior and development.”<sup>97</sup> Putnam then discussed the importance of social capital within families, stating that “Families that enjoy close bonds and parents who instill the value of reciprocity in their kids are more likely to ‘gain a greater degree of compliance and adherence to their values.’”<sup>98</sup> Areas high in social capital (including, obviously, those areas where parents instill civic responsibility and virtue to their children) also tend to have higher potential to prosper, helping trust and social networks grow, which will help other individuals, who will in in turn help other neighborhoods, benefiting even nations.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Parents' Influence on Youths' Civic Behaviors: The Civic Context of the Caregiving Environment. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*: 2006, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 447-455. Page 454.

<sup>97</sup> Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of the American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster Press, 2000. Page 296.

<sup>98</sup> Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of the American Community*, Page 305.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, page 319.

The importance of social capital within communities, beyond the family unit, extends into adulthood, as well. The next chapter will address families of United States military as a subunit of the greater American population; however, other civic-society literature, such as a 2017 study by Heidi M. Berggren of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth entitled “Cohousing as Civic Society: Choosing Involvement and Political Participation in the United States,” found that those who live in semi-communal housing with a shared community space (such as a shared kitchen or laundry facilities) with an active management company that encourages civic participation results in higher political/civic involvement of the residents.<sup>100</sup> What is interesting about the Berggren study is that, in the conclusion, Berggren suggests further study to compare co-housing community members to non-members. This is an insightful suggestion to consider, especially because it can be argued that the decline of traditional forms of civic engagement (as found in Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*) can be argued to coincide with the less-centralized and communal growth of American suburbia.

According to Lawrence Levy of the National Center for Suburban Studies of Hofstra University in the 2011 film, *Suburban America: Problems and Promise*, “For at least the last six presidential campaigns, right on through Barack Obama, the suburbs have de-

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<sup>100</sup> Berggren, Heidi M. 2017. "Cohousing as Civic Society: Cohousing Involvement and Political Participation in the United States." *Social Science Quarterly* 98, no. 1: 57-72. *EconLit with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 3, 2018). Page 67.

cided who occupies the White House. The suburbs also have decided who controls Congress.”<sup>101</sup> Levy then went on to describe the typical suburban voter as moderate and independent, signaling the clear departure of many Americans away from a more politically centralized thinking or way of life.<sup>102</sup> In the same film, University of Nevada, Las Vegas professor Robert E. Lang argued that “The suburbs at this point are 50% of the U.S. population, so they basically control everything. And since ’88, I think it’s fair to say you had enough suburban development by that late in the ’80’s election cycle to have produced a kind of suburban heavy vote.”<sup>103</sup> What is perhaps most interesting about the dates that Lang mentioned in this film is that the dates coincide, almost perfectly, with trends found in the civic participation data sets (relating to participation in volunteer organizations, such as the Parent Teacher Association, and trends in presidential voting rates outside of the South) that were documented in Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*.<sup>104</sup> It can be argued that the rise of American suburbia has also resulted in the decline of traditional political activism because many consider themselves to be too independent from their neighbors, a clear departure from the densely populated sense of yesteryear.

What can this mean for our nation, and the parents of children, in the United States? The results of the Berggren study shows that political awareness is not dead in America, but it does need to be kept alive by thoughtful planning and active engagement by the participants. If families do not find civics to be relevant or important, it is unlikely

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<sup>101</sup> *Suburban America: Problems & Promise*. 2011. Accessed July 3, 2018. <https://fod.in-fobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=107557&xtid=47255>.

<sup>102</sup> *Suburban America: Problems & Promise*. 2011. Accessed July 3, 2018. <https://fod.in-fobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=107557&xtid=47255>.

<sup>103</sup> *Suburban America: Problems & Promise*.

<sup>104</sup> Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. Pages 32 and 57.

that they will actively engage their children in the same, even if children are offered civics-inspired classes as part of their coursework. Or, if policy makers were to re-approach civics in order to try to increase awareness to this important educational subject, they may want to consider methods that increase engagement and awareness over memorization and fill-in-the-bubble testing in an attempt to re-invigorate some feelings of community among students.

Some movement has been made with respect to new approaches to civic education in recent years. A 2014 study by the National Center for Learning and Civic Education laid out 6 “proven practices” in civic education that lean more toward growing a sense of civic literacy among students, by “designing and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community services that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction,” and “offer(ing) extracurricular activities they provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities” as major tenets of the practices.<sup>105</sup> While the results of the implementation of this study will likely not be seen until the release of the 2018 NAEP exam results, the alleged return to community-based learning with respect to civics may (or may not) yield results that may be worth further study.

The United States of America is a much different nation than it was at the time of its founding. Americans are busy, with many moving outside of cities in order to have a backyard and “good education” for their children. The traditional sense of community,

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<sup>105</sup> Guilfoile, Lisa and Delander, Brandy. Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning. Report. January 2014. Accessed June 10, 2018. <http://www.ecs.org/clearing-house/01/10/48/11048.pdf>

based in cities or small towns where people congregated for church, education, and political activism, or at places like parks for friendship, for have been replaced by the long lines of traffic and fenced-in backyards of individuals who likely moved many miles away from their own friends or family in order to pursue their own (suburban) American dreams. Modern community is not defined in the same way as traditional community had been in the days of Jefferson, Lincoln or Tocqueville— it now includes concepts like social media over groups that meet in person like 4-H, presenting new challenges with respect to how to keep engagement alive in the modern era.

The next chapter will study the U.S. military as an active subset of the American population in an attempt to understand whether there may be a military/civilian divide in civic education and will analyze whether or not the military can provide some valuable insight into ways that civic education can be improved. While NAEP's study asked the respondents about their parents' education levels, gender, racial/ethnic groups, eligibility for school lunch programs, whether they attend public or private schools, and the methodologies used for classroom learning, I believe that a civic education still does, in so many ways, begin at home and within the greater community in which a child is raised. While public schools take on much of the national education of youth, it is a logical conclusion that children of civically-active adults will perform better in civics classes, due to a heightened sense of responsibility and pride in our American republic. While the next chapter will address the potential for military children to perform better than their civilian counterparts in the subject of civics, it does not address other aspects of civic participation, such as voting and political party engagement.

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **THE U.S. MILITARY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE MILITARY-CONNECTED CHILDREN: WORTH FURTHER ACADEMIC ATTENTION?**

If patriotism, or the sense of love for country, is strongly tied to military service, then it is likely that this same sense of duty for country is passed along, or taught by parenting, to American military children. This sense of patriotism, or support of one's country, and feeling of responsibility toward the protection of a nation's ideals, is likely to create an extra sense of awareness relating to civic literacy. Therefore, it is this thesis' assertion that the children of those who serve, or have served, in the military have a higher sense of civic literacy (and likely citizenship knowledge) than their civilian counterparts, due the inherent differences between American military and civilian family lifestyles and the heightened sense of duty that the military life creates in order to maintain a ready and able force.

This chapter will assess current scholarship relating to American military (and their family) demographics in an attempt to study whether there could be a potential link between heightened civic engagement and military-connected children (or students) when compared to civilian students. I will also compare levels of voluntarism, and other traditional forms of civic engagement, between the military and civilians, and study whether the children of military are more likely to participate in these activities than civilian children, as well, even if the active duty service the family experienced was while a child was still young. This research will also seek to compare whether veterans of the U.S. military tend to be more reflective, as a cohort, of their active-duty or civilian counterparts.

In the second chapter, this scholarship discussed why, in an era where civic knowledge seems to be lacking among both American youth and adults, it is important to remind the public about the impact of modeling positive civic behavior, resulting in a heightened sense of civic responsibility and related knowledge. This fixed mind set is essential to the maintenance of the American republic. While studies have been done on various social and economic subsets of the American public with respect to the impact of civic participation and activity of a parent can affect the potential of a child to adopt similar mindsets into adulthood, there seems to be a lack in understanding exactly how one American subculture, the military, can impact the sense of civic responsibility among the children of those military members.

In order to establish the need for further research within the confines of this thesis project with respect to the civic knowledge and engagement among the children of the United States military, this thesis will do the following by offering research that outlines the following:

- Establish why military children, also referred to as military-connected students for those children that are old enough to fall within the age brackets of an American K-12 education (specifically: middle school children, or children in grades 6-8), are a unique subset of the American population by giving an overview of the United States military subculture.
- Help the reader understand the social and psychological linkage of parental civic involvement in American children, and why this puts American military children in a unique position for heightened civic involvement and civic literacy among the military-connected children.



- Discuss how the unique mentality and military culture upbringing can produce positive civically-minded upbringings by studying how the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) has produced positive results for their pupils, and how some of the DoDEA's approaches may benefit national public schools, as well, even for children whom are raised in a non-military environment, in order to produce a more generally civic-minded population as they grow into adulthood.

Many studies, including one conducted by Tim Johnson, and Christopher T. Dawes in a 2016 edition of *Political Behavior*, entitled “Do Parents’ Life Experiences Affect the Political and Civic Participation of their Children? The Case of Draft-Induced Military Service,” argue that children are often affected into adulthood by important life events, and that “political and civic socialization, moreover, appears to be driven by the family”.<sup>106</sup> This same article asserts that most Americans tend to be of the same political affiliation as their parents, and how “they are much more likely to engage in civic endeavors if their parents do as well.”<sup>107</sup>

It should come as no surprise to readers that active-duty military families, and the children of those who are military, live very different lives than typical civilians. A 2012 book geared toward public educators, counselors, school psychologists and social workers, *The Pupil Personnel Guide for Supporting Students from Military Families: An Introduction to Military Culture*, by Ron Avi Astor and Linda Jabobsen, et. al., states that

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<sup>106</sup> Johnson, T. & Dawes, C.T. “Do Parents’ Life Experiences Affect the Political and Civic Participation of their Children? The Case of Draft-Induced Military Service,” *Polit Behav* (2016) 38: 793. <https://doi-org.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/10.1007/s11109-016-9334-z>

<sup>107</sup> Johnson, T. & Dawes, C.T. “Do Parents’ Life Experiences Affect the Political and Civic Participation of their Children? The Case of Draft-Induced Military Service.”

military-connected children (or, students) “live unique and interesting lives. They have opportunities to travel around the world, to gain firsthand knowledge of cultures that most American students only dream about, and can often adapt quickly to new situations and surroundings.”<sup>108</sup>

According to a 2013 study, military families now outnumber the current military all-volunteer force in America by 1.4 to 1.<sup>109</sup> Military upbringings do not come with all positive results, however: active-duty military lifestyles can result in military-connected students experiencing statistically higher risk of gaps in school attendance, emotional fallout from a separated or deployed parent or family member, and a sense of isolation when compared to typical American civilian students.<sup>110</sup>

Most military-connected students do live in, and among, typical civilian American communities, despite the presence of base/post housing and the presence of military-operated Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school. According to Astor, et. al, across the country and world: “only 7% of U.S. military children— about 86,000— attend schools and preschools operated by DoDEA.”<sup>111</sup> DoDEA schools, and their impact, will be addressed in Chapter 4.

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<sup>108</sup> Astor, Ron Avi and Jacobsen, Linda, et. al. *The Pupil Personnel Guide For Supporting Students from Military Families*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2012. Page 1.

<sup>109</sup> Molly Clever and David R. Segal. "The Demographics of Military Children and Families." *The Future of Children* 23, no. 2 (2013): 13-39. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed December 1, 2017).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, page 2

Military-connected students also tend to volunteer for military service at a much higher rate than their civilian counterparts. A recent article by [slate.com](http://www.slate.com), entitled “America Is Relying on a “Warrior Caste” of Military Families to Fight Its Wars. That’s a Problem”, 25 to 35 percent of American service members are the son or daughter of someone who served in the military.<sup>112</sup> Military families tend to have children at younger ages than civilians, and often decide to re-enlist, or “get out,” depending on the happiness level of their families.<sup>113</sup>

Some other statistics shed some more light on the unique subculture of the American military, especially with respect to parental sub-demographics highlighted in the National Association for Education Progress’ 2014 Civics Exam. Despite access to programs like the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the active duty tends to have fewer people with bachelors’ degrees than when compared to their civilian counterparts. According to Molly Clever and David Segal, in their article entitled “The Demographics of Military Children and Families,” written for [www.thefutureofchildren.org](http://www.thefutureofchildren.org),

“Thanks to the military’s education requirements, relatively few people on active duty (0.4 percent) or in the Guard and Reserve (2.4 percent) lack a high school diploma or GED, compared with civilians in the labor force (10.7 percent). . . However, more people among the civilian labor force have a bachelor’s degree or higher (29.2 percent) than among the active-duty force (18.3 percent) or the Guard and Reserve (19.8 percent).”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Schafer, Amy. "America Is Relying on a “Warrior Caste” of Military Families to Fight Its Wars. That’s a Problem." Slate Magazine. August 02, 2017. Accessed October 23, 2017. [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/politics/2017/08/the\\_warrior\\_caste\\_of\\_military\\_families\\_that\\_fight\\_america\\_s\\_wars.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2017/08/the_warrior_caste_of_military_families_that_fight_america_s_wars.html).

<sup>113</sup> Clever, Molly and Segal, David. “The Demographics of Military Children and Families”.

<sup>114</sup> Molly Clever and David R. Segal. "The Demographics of Military Children and Families."

When broken down among enlisted, versus officer, populations on active duty, and to the general population, as of 2014, 99.1 percent of the enlisted population have earned at least a high school diploma (compared with 88.3 percent of the general population), and 6.1 percent of enlisted have earned a bachelor's degree.<sup>115</sup> Officers tend to have a much higher percentage of higher or advanced degrees than enlisted, with 83.8 percent of military officers having at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 32.0 percent of the general American population aged 25 or over having an equivalent level of higher education.<sup>116</sup>

With respect to race, the 2014 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community, found: "Members who report themselves as White represent the largest proportion of the total DoD force (71.0%), while Black or African American members represent 16.8 percent. Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander members make up 3.8 percent, 1.2 percent, and 0.9 percent, respectively. Over two percent (2.4%) of members report themselves as Multi-racial."<sup>117</sup>

The military, despite its inherent lifestyle stresses, can also have an interesting effect on marriage. African-American men and women, and white male, military members are more likely to be married, and less likely to be divorced, than their civilian counterparts, whereas "white women in the military are more likely to divorce than their civilian

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<sup>115</sup> *2014 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community*. Report. MilitaryOneSource. Accessed December 1, 2017. <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf>.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> *2014 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community*. Report. MilitaryOneSource.

counterparts.”<sup>118</sup> Clever and Segal, in this same study, assert that the military, with its structures, tends to “equalize the constraints faced by families of all races.”<sup>119</sup>

## VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE U.S. MILITARY SUB-CULTURE

The active-duty military is a small subset of American culture, making up less than 1 percent of the American population.<sup>120</sup> According to a recent article in *Military Psychology*, military tends to teach “seven core values that are essential in an effective leader: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.”<sup>121</sup> Patriotism is also a strong quality of military personnel— after all, if they didn’t love their country, they would not place their life on the line, or put their family through moves and deployments, if they did not have a high sense of pride for their country, and a desire to serve.<sup>122</sup>

According to an article published in USA Today in January of 2006, entitled “The Ark of Civic Virtue,” by Delores T. Puterbaugh, “The routines and discipline of military

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid. Research cited in this report comes from: Kelty, Ryan, Kleykamp, Meredith, and Segal, David R. “The Military and the Transition to Adulthood,” *The Future of Children* 20, no. 1 (2010): 181–200.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. Research cited in this report comes from: Lundquist, Jennifer. “The Black-White Gap in Marital Dissolution among Young Adults: What Can a Counterfactual Scenario Tell Us?” *Social Problems* 53, no. 3 (2006): 421–41, doi: 10.1525/sp.2006.53.3.421.

<sup>120</sup> “By The Numbers: Today’s Military.” NPR. July 03, 2011. Accessed August 10, 2017. <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/03/137536111/by-the-numbers-todays-military>.

<sup>121</sup> Packard, E. “Aspiring Military Leaders Share Certain Positive Qualities.” *Monitor on Psychology*. Accessed August 10, 2017. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug06/military.aspx>.

<sup>122</sup> Moore, Bret. “Shared Personality Traits of Your Military and Veteran Clients.” *Psych Central Professional*. April 27, 2016. Accessed August 10, 2017. <https://pro.psychcentral.com/shared-personality-traits-of-your-military-and-veteran-clients/0013706.html>.

life may seem unnecessarily structured and artificial to modern civilian critics. The snapping to attention seems silly, ‘Sir’ and ‘Ma’am’ to all but Southern or Midwestern ears, either sound antiquated or sarcastic. Why have perfectly polished boots or crisply ironed battle dress uniforms? The egalitarian civilian cannot see a reason to treat a general any differently than an enlisted man, or understand the purpose of eating, exercising, or praying as a group. . . Military readiness requires a sense of unity and willingness to subsume one’s self-interest to that of the group.”<sup>123</sup>

The sense of community, across the military, can vary greatly. According to a 1999 study among American Air Force Communities, “Civic Engagement and Sense of Community in the Military,” by Drs. Gary Bowen and James Martin, military. . .

“. . . respondents were more likely to report a strong sense of community when they felt there was a greater participation in base events and activities by members and families (community participation), when they felt that members and families experienced ease in connecting with others in the base community (community connections), and when they felt they felt there were shared levels of responsibility and collective competence in their community (community capacity).”<sup>124</sup>

Further, “previous researchers have found that that some military families feel overwhelmed by the demands on their family and their lives and that civic engagement and a sense of community help service members and their families feelings of being overwhelmed.”<sup>125</sup> In other words, as in the civilian community, *participation* within the active

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<sup>123</sup> Puterbaugh, Dolores T. 2009. "The Ark of Civic Virtue." *USA Today Magazine* 137, no. 2764: 16. *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed August 7, 2017).

<sup>124</sup> Bowen, Gary L., James A. Martin, Jay A. Mancini, and John P. Nelson. "Civic Engagement and Sense of Community in the Military." *Journal of Community Practice* 8, no. 2 (2000): 71-93. Accessed July 25, 2017. doi:10.1300/j125v08n02\_01. Page 84

<sup>125</sup> “Civic Engagement and Sense of Community in the Military." IVMF. Accessed July 25, 2017. <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/article/civic-engagement-and-sense-of-community-in-the-military/>.

duty military community is a key delineating factor: if a service member and/or their family feels accepted by, and participates with their military community, they are more likely to participate in civic activities, which will help them feel less overwhelmed in their military lifestyle.

Rebecca Nesbit, and David A. Reingold studied this topic in a recent work entitled “Soldiers to Citizens: The Link Between Military Service and Volunteering”. In this scholarship, Nesbit and Reingold tried to find data that linked the military lifestyle with higher rates of voluntarism and civic engagement, based on the assumption that the demanding norms and institutions of military life, creating a community of “men and women who are willing to set aside their own self-interest to follow the path of duty and honor in serving their country”.<sup>126</sup> While scholarship of the twentieth century (focusing on the veterans of World War II, in particular) has broadly linked military service with more active civic involvement, Nesbit and Reingold studied whether or not this perception still holds in a now all-volunteer, post- Cold War force.<sup>127</sup> According to Nesbit, et al: “The implication of this study, and others like it, is that the motivations responsible for military service spill over into other forms of civic service, such as volunteering, and that the behaviors of World War II veterans are typical of all veterans”.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Nesbit, Rebecca, and David A. Reingold. "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering." *Public Administration Review* 71, no. 1 (2011): 67-76.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41061156>.

Also cited in this passage: *Toward a Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War*, edited by Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal, 14-31. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Nesbit, Rebecca, and David A. Reingold. "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering." *Public Administration Review* 71, no. 1 (2011): 67-76.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41061156>. Page 74

During their study, Nesbit and Reingold found that, as a whole, the linkage between volunteerism and military service is nuanced: being a married veteran is positively correlated to volunteering and positive civic behaviors, whereas younger and unmarried veterans tend to volunteer at lower levels.<sup>129</sup> Further, military service seems to have more positive volunteering outcomes among African-American and Hispanic veterans, as has having served during a time of war.<sup>130</sup>

***Nesbit and Reingold Table: Probability of Volunteering by Primary Military Service Variables<sup>131</sup>***

	Male		Female	
	Married	Unmarried	Married	Unmarried
<b><i>White</i></b>				
Nonveteran	.26	.21	.39	.33
Veteran	.26	.17	.39	.28
War Veteran	.30	.21	.44	.33
<b><i>Black</i></b>				
Nonveteran	.22	.18	.35	.29
Veteran	.26	.18	.40	.29
War Veteran	.30	.21	.45	.33

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Also cited in this passage: *Toward a Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War*, edited by Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal, 14-31. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>129</sup> Nesbit, Rebecca, and David A. Reingold. "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering." Page 73.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Nesbit, Rebecca, and David A. Reingold. "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering." Page 72.



<i>Hispanic</i>				
Nonveteran	.17	.14	.28	.23
Veteran	.24	.16	.37	.27
War Veteran	.28	.19	.42	.31

The results of the Nesbit and Reingold study can prove positive for the purposes of this thesis, especially among the children of African-American or Hispanic military members, as the children of military tend to be in families of married parents.<sup>132</sup> According to Clever and Segal: “Among active-duty service members, 4 percent of men and 12 percent of women are single parents; among the Guard and Reserve, 8 percent of men and 17 percent of women are single parents.”<sup>133</sup> There are many factors that can play into whether or not a person chooses to take part in positive civic engagement within a community, above and beyond military service, but if economics are a factor in whether or not a person can offer service to a community, the military offers one incentive: in military service households, at least one of the parents earns a consistent paycheck.<sup>134</sup>

In an attempt to better understand not only the military/civilian divide, but to understand whether or not there may even be differences between active duty and veterans about volunteerism, as part of my overall civics survey conducted the week of June 22-26, 2018, the survey created for this thesis asked the following to the 45 qualified respondents (parents of students enrolled in a United States private, public, charter of Department of Education Agency school, grades 6-8) “Do you believe that volunteering is a

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<sup>132</sup> 2014 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community. Report. MilitaryOneSource.

<sup>133</sup> Clever, Molly and Segal, David. “The Demographics of Military Children and Families”.

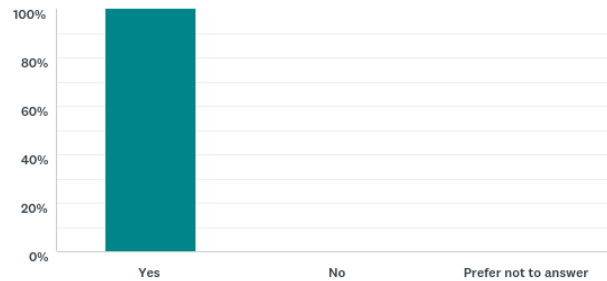
<sup>134</sup> Ibid. Page 22.

civic responsibility,” and the results were below. “Civilians” are noted as those who neither identified as active duty nor veteran:

***\*\*Charts shown by population\*\****

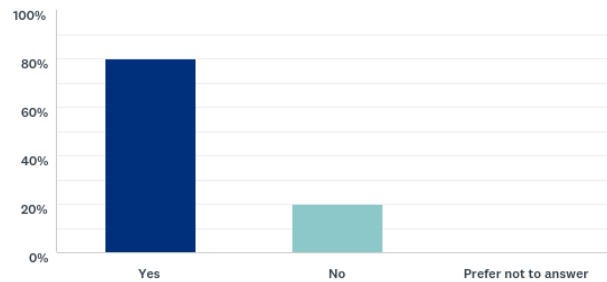
**Military (8 respondents):**

Q15 Do you believe that volunteering is a civic responsibility?



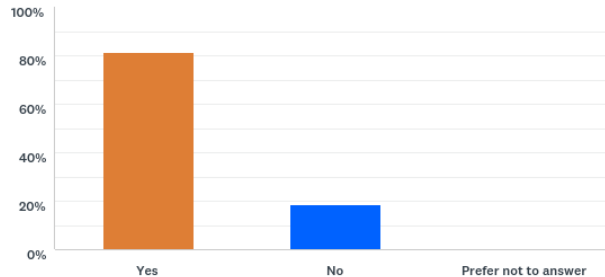
**Veteran (5 respondents):**

Q15 Do you believe that volunteering is a civic responsibility?



### Civilian (27 respondents):

Q15 Do you believe that volunteering is a civic responsibility?



Since this report will study the potential of heightened civic involvement and social responsibility in American military children, it is important to understand the linkage between the potential of civic involvement in American children when compared to the civic actions of their parents. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the spirit of parental involvement through activities such as voluntarism, seems to have a direct positive impact on the following, regardless of income or background:

- Earning higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs;
- Passing classes, earning credits and being promoted to higher grade levels;
- Attending school regularly; and
- Graduating and going on to postsecondary education.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> DoDEA. "Parental Involvement & Engagement Strategies." Keeping Students at the Center. Accessed December 02, 2017. <http://slmodules.dodea.edu/lessons/7315>.

Also cited:

Henderson, Anne. *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement: Annual Synthesis 2002*. Austin, TX: National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools, 2002. Page 13.

A 2016 study performed by Elizabeth S. White of Illinois State University, and Rashmita S. Mistry of the University of California, Los Angeles, entitled “Parent Civic Beliefs, Civic Participation, Socialization Practices and Child Civic Engagement,” analyzed data from 359 “racially, ethnically and economically diverse upper elementary students in Southern California.”<sup>136</sup> The purpose of the study was to examine civic engagement in middle childhood, in order to better understand the degree to which parents’ civic beliefs, actions, and socialization impacted similar potential with their children.<sup>137</sup> This study was unique in that most scholarship related to the study of civic participation and attitudes has focus primarily on adults and adolescents, and not at an earlier developmental period, such as middle childhood.<sup>138</sup>

The White/Mistry study emphasized the impact of social trust, or the “trust of people in general”, “rooted in the sense of communalism, reflecting optimism, a connection to community members, and a willingness to work cooperatively with others,” in conducting their research.<sup>139</sup> The results showed a strong connection between the model-

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<sup>136</sup> White, Elizabeth S., and Rashmita S. Mistry. 2016. "Parent Civic Beliefs, Civic Participation, Socialization Practices, and Child Civic Engagement." *Applied Developmental Science* 20, no. 1: 44-60. *Business Source Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 24, 2017).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> White, Elizabeth S., and Rashmita S. Mistry. 2016. "Parent Civic Beliefs, Civic Participation, Socialization Practices, and Child Civic Engagement.”

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

This work cited other scholarship in ascertaining this definition:

-Spitz, R. T., & MacKinnon, J. R. (1993). Predicting success in volunteer community service. *Psychological Reports*, 73, 815–818. [10.2466=pr0.1993.73.3.815](https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1993.73.3.815)

-Uslaner, E. M. (2002). *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

ing of parental community and civic engagement, and the similar desires for similar engagement with their children.<sup>140</sup> Further, it was reported that children who have a stronger expectation of interpersonal and community support tended to have a reciprocal sense of social and civic responsibility to that same community.<sup>141</sup>

This same study was aware of its shortcomings and limitations, such as the lack of explanation for certain phenomenon, such as why children tended to report higher levels of responsibility to individual people, than the endorsement of civic values and/or community, which can prove problematic if a similar study were conducted with children of the military, and further studies with respect to how civic responsibility and engagement may change throughout childhood, adolescence and beyond, are needed in order understand the longitudinal impacts may change over a period of pre-determined years.<sup>142</sup> However, the results of this particular study do seem to point to the strong impact of parenting and modeling among American youth with respect to civic responsibility, engagement and beliefs.

Although the White/Mistral study did an across-the-board study of multiple ethnic and economic groups in Southern California, they did not pull out data results from the children of military as a subset of their study. This thesis sought to challenge research this theory among the survey respondents by creating a data subset that was to be answered by American public, private or charter middle school aged children and their parents, from where an active duty military data sampling could be extrapolated.. The second half

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<sup>140</sup> Uslaner, E. M. (2002). *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> White, Elizabeth S., and Rashmita S. Mistry. 2016. "Parent Civic Beliefs, Civic Participation, Socialization Practices, and Child Civic Engagement."

of the research survey was both written for, and intended to be answered by, the middle-school aged children of the initial respondents. The questions were meant to gauge not only civic knowledge (such as “How often are U.S. presidential elections held), but also a sense of civic awareness and altruism by asking questions forward-thinking questions.

The responses to the question “Would you consider joining the U.S. military someday?” are divided by population percentages, below:

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Yes (by percentage)</b>	<b>No (by percentage)</b>	<b>Don’t know (by percentage)</b>
Military	71.43%	14.29%	14.29%
Veteran	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%
Civilian	26.09%	69.57%	4.35%

Further, when asked other questions that relate lifestyle aspects of being a member of a military family, such as “Do your children know the words to the American National Anthem,” 100 percent of military respondents answered with “yes,” whereas 88.89 percent of civilian parents, and 60 percent of veteran parents answered with “yes.” The National Anthem is played at official military events, arguably increasing exposure to this patriotic song throughout their parent(s) military career, leading to a greater chance of their memorizing the words to this song.

If children tend to model their sense of civic behavior from the actions of their parents, it is likely that the all-volunteer American military, where all active duty service members signed up, on their own volition, to serve can have a positive impact on the civic perceptions and sense of responsibility in their children. The military may stress

more “traditional” forms of civic engagement and participation, such as voluntarism and the importance of voting, but it is clear that more research and study is needed in this area, in order to better understand if there are aspects of a military upbringing that may have future policy impact with respect to civic education.

If civic duty, and implied knowledge through experience, is not passed on through genetic traits to children, then it has to be a learned behavior. Scholarship and studies performed by social scientists like Nesbit and Reingold highlight the fact that, even though married people with military service backgrounds do tend to volunteer at higher rates than non-marrieds or those without military backgrounds, the rates of overall volunteerism among these populations have decreased since the World War II generation.<sup>143</sup> When you compare this result to other modern studies, like the concept of the Pew Research Center’s growth of the “Nones,” who are Americans who do not identify with religion (another social value that is often taught by parents to their children), and declining levels of volunteerism as found in Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*, the importance of parents teaching children civic values through positive examples like in America become even more pertinent.<sup>144</sup> If civic knowledge is passed onto children like religion is practiced and passed on through example and consistency, it seems likely that parents who practice good civic behavior through positive behavior (volunteering, voting) are more likely to pass those behaviors on to their children, as well.

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<sup>143</sup> Nesbit, Rebecca, and David A. Reingold. "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering."

<sup>144</sup> Liu, Joseph. "'Nones' on the Rise." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. October 08, 2012. Accessed December 01, 2017. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

In considering the potential for civic awareness to be “handed down” from parents to children, due to parents engaging their children in civic-based discussions, the author of this thesis pondered whether or not this awareness may result in the children of the population subsets being more interested in their government/civics classes.

When asked “Do you find your civics/government classes to be interesting?” the answers (divided by specific population subsets) were:

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Yes (by percent-age)</b>	<b>No (by percent-age)</b>	<b>Don’t know (by percentage)</b>
Military	57.14%	42.86%	0.00%
Veteran	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Civilian	65.22%	30.43%	4.35%

The answers to the question above ran counter to the underlying claim within this thesis; however, this can lead to another question: does civic appreciation, such as feeling the duty to volunteer and to know patriotic songs like the National Anthem, have any link with military children being more educated in facts that are taught within their civics/government classes? The data collected within the scope of this research is not conclusive. When the students of the subpopulations were asked “How often are U.S. presidential elections held,” 100 percent of military children respondents answered correctly— every four years— civilian children were not far behind with 95.65 percent of civilians answering correctly, and 50 percent of veteran children knew the correct answer. Other questions, such as “How long is one term of office for U.S. Senators,” did not delineate military-connected children as being more knowledgeable: 28.57 percent of the



military-connected children answered the question correctly (6 years), whereas 30.43 percent of civilian children answered the question correctly. One question where the military children shone was a constitutional one: “What famous document starts with ‘We the people. . .?’” The military-connected children were the clear winners in this category, with 71.43 percent answering correctly (the U.S. Constitution), whereas 50 percent of veteran students and 21.74 percent of civilian students answered the question correctly.

This chapter discussed some of the differences between active-duty military, and argued how this “one percent” may be a unique population worth studying with respect to civic education. While the data set that was collected with seemed to shine a light on a positive connection between the military community and traditional patriotic concepts (such as voting, volunteering and knowing the words to the National Anthem), it has been inconclusive with respect to understanding whether or not military-connected students will do better on a standardized test, such as NAEP’s civics exam, that deals with civic facts (such as knowing how long a U.S. senator serves for). The next chapter will study U.S. public schools that tend to be heavily military in their enrollment: Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) schools in an attempt to further study potential links between military-connected children and potentialities for civics test scores.

## CHAPTER 4

# DoDEA SCHOOLS AND A POSSIBLE LIGHT IN THE DARK OF CIVIC AWARENESS

Since this research has established that military-connected children are a unique subset of the American population, due to an upbringing that is impacted by the military lifestyle of their parents, it would be interesting to look at education that is focused almost solely on the education of United States military children, to understand if there are any positive impacts of Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools that may produce outcomes in the general public education system in America, as well.

DoDEA schools are unique within American public education. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, most military students do not attend DoDEA schools, but rather attend civilian public, private, and home-schooled programs. According to a 2017 report, DoDEA has 165 schools in fourteen countries, seven states, Guam and Puerto Rico serve 71,000 students (of which 40 percent are minorities, and 10 percent are special education students), and employs 8,700 educators.<sup>145</sup> The student body is largely comprised of the children of enlisted personnel (80 percent), and the vast majority of their parents' (94 percent) only have a high school diploma listed as their highest level of education.<sup>146</sup> One of the most interesting factors of DoDEA schools is that they have a 35-40 percent student

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<sup>145</sup> "Department of Defense Schools: Their Secret Weapons for Success." Education World. Accessed December 01, 2017. [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_issues/issues349.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/issues349.shtml)  
Also Accessed: "DoDEA Enrollment Data, 27 November 2017." DoDEA. Accessed December 01, 2017. [http://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/enrollment\\_display.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/enrollment_display.cfm), and "About DoDEA." DoDEA. Accessed December 01, 2017. <http://www.dodea.edu/aboutDoDEA/index.cfm>.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

turnover rate every year, as well, while still boasting a 97 percent high school graduation rate.<sup>147</sup>

DoDEA schools were established shortly after World War II in order to serve the unique needs of military families both stateside and abroad.<sup>148</sup> DoDEA schools are located primarily on United States military bases, and are governed under the policy guidance of Congress, as opposed to state and local school boards, resulting in a per pupil spending (about 30 percent more than an average public school).<sup>149</sup> When compared to national test scores, DoDEA schools tend to be highly competitive when compared to the results from other states: according to the National Association for Educational Progress (NAEP) 2015 "Nation's Report Card," DoDEA schools performed higher than the national average for math, and 49 percent of their students in Grade 4 performed at the level of Proficient or higher, which was higher than 43 states/jurisdictions in America.<sup>150</sup>

Although the scores addressed with NAEP results did not delineate how DoDEA schools performed with respect to civics, another test, the high overall performance of the students at DoDEA schools with respect to reading and math may still support the claim that military parentage may serve to the benefit of children with respect to civic education: if military children at DoDEA schools perform well for general subjects, such as reading or math, it is unlikely that they will fall below national levels for subjects like so-

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Joiner, Lottie L. "A Different Kind of District." *American School Board Journal* 190, no. 7 (July 2003): 16. *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 1, 2017).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> National Association of Education Progress. "2015 Mathematics State Snapshot Report." NAEP "Nation's Report Card". Accessed December 1, 2017. <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreport-card/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016009DS4.pdf>.

cial studies or civics. This hypothesis can be furthered by highlighting how military parents at DoDEA schools tend to lead by example: according to Lottie Joiner, in her 2002 article entitled “A Different Kind of District”: “The structure, discipline, training and accountability that the military requires also carry over into the school community. Military personnel take a ‘corporate commitment’ to be active in their child’s education and are often relieved from work responsibilities at least once a month to volunteer or attend school activities.”<sup>151</sup>

It can be argued that, if military leadership is supportive of parents volunteering at their children’s school, thereby providing a lower barrier to voluntarism, this can have a strong positive impact on the school as a whole, and on the academic performance of their children, giving a positive example of civic activism for the children of that school. While military parents and their children have to deal with different obstacles, such as deployments, that civilian students do not have to face, a positive attitude by military leadership with respect to volunteering, this can have positive impacts on both the schools, and the students. Further, if DoDEA schools are aware of the support of voluntarism by military leadership, then those schools may be more likely to ask for volunteers, as well, as research has shown that people are four times more likely to volunteer when asked to do so, serving as a positive example to even the military parents of school-aged military-connected children who do not attend DoDEA schools.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Joiner, Lottie L. 2003. "A Different Kind of District." *American School Board Journal* 190, no. 7: 16. *MasterFILE Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 2, 2017).

<sup>152</sup> Nesbit, Rebecca, and David A.2 Reingold. 2011. "Soldiers to Citizens: The Link between Military Service and Volunteering." *Public Administration Review* 71, no. 1: 67-76. *OmniFile Full Text Mega (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 2, 2017).

While the positive link between parental involvement and voluntarism has shown traditionally positive benefits to the education (civic or otherwise), there are a lack of studies that specifically seek to study the positive impact of parental involvement at DoDEA schools. Charity Mason, in her 2017 doctoral dissertation for Northcentral University, entitled “Identification of Levels of Parental Involvement in DoDEA Okinawan Schools,” explored this subject by sampling one DoDEA school, in Okinawa, Japan.<sup>153</sup> Among her samples were: active duty personnel, active duty spouses (among both officer and enlisted ranks), as well as respondents who served in the Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Army, and the ethnicities of respondents included those who were White, African-American, and Asian.<sup>154</sup> The results of the Mason study seemed to be positive among parental involvement in this particular DoDEA school: all 15 of the parents “indicated that they participated at least in some way with their children”.<sup>155</sup> Further, “These active-duty military parents may not have been able to be in the classroom, but they were involved with their children as often as possible and in the manner available to them.”<sup>156</sup> The Mason study neither compared the parental involvement levels of military parents against civilian parents, nor investigated the involvement of military parents in non-DoDEA institutions, but scholarship would benefit if others were to approach these questions in the future.

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<sup>153</sup> Mason, C. (2017). *Identification of Levels of Parental Involvement in DoDEA Okinawan Schools* (Order No. 10258925). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1882289344). Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/docview/1882289344?accountid=11752>

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, Page 76 .

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, Page 127.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, Page 128.

If the mostly military students at DoDEA schools seem to be benefitting from the higher rate of parental involvement, resulting in high national test scores on national tests such as NAEP, then can we draw any conclusions with respect to this thesis that can be applied to other schools across the nation (that will likely help increase national civic awareness and aptitude, both inside and outside of the classroom)? Could simple suggestions, such as helping schools be more proactive in asking parents to volunteer, help in some communities (even if they are non-military)? Finally, where is national policy with respect to civic education, and can the rest of the nation learn from the examples that DoDEA schools have set? Further, in the words of Anja Neundorf, Richard Niemi, and Kaat Smets from their work, “The Compensation Effect of Civic Education on Political Engagement: How Civics Classes Make Up for Missing Parental Socialization,” “does civic education, broadly conceived, reduce differences among youths that originate in the family, or does it possibly enhance pre-existing differences? Can civics training make up in some way for having come from a household in which there is less access to academic and similar resources and less interaction related to political news and the public sphere generally?”<sup>157</sup> Further, can schools compensate for a lack of parental involvement, if needed, with respect to national public policy, based on examples from military parentage, like the positive examples we have seen from DoDEA schools?

This chapter has highlighted some of the positive impacts of military parenting with respect to positive examples of civic engagement, and how that example may lead toward higher levels of civic knowledge and engagement with their military-connected

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<sup>157</sup> Neundorf, Anja, Richard Niemi, and Kaat Smets. 2016. "The Compensation Effect of Civic Education on Political Engagement: How Civics Classes Make Up for Missing Parental Socialization." *Political Behavior* 38, no. 4: 921-949. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 2, 2017).

children. It seems that there is a positive correlation, overall, between military parentage and a heightened sense of service, as (according to a 2015 report by the DoDEA) 15 percent of male DoDEA high school graduates (and 5 percent of female DoDEA graduates) enlist in the military after graduation, compared to 5 percent of general American high school graduates (according to a 2006 the Bureau of Labor Statistics).<sup>158</sup> While multi-generational enlistment in the military is not a sole predictor of civic awareness or aptitude within the American population, it can be argued that the spirit of voluntarism among military families does seem to be shared through positive example with their children, leading to a higher potential of positive civic engagement when compared to the general American population. Further, it can be argued that those who are involved in an all-volunteer American military, who actively volunteer and participate in their community, are more likely to be engaged in other positive civic actions, such as voting or even running for office, as their sense of shared responsibility will likely lead to greater civic competence.<sup>159</sup>

It is clear that, based on the lack of data relating to broader voluntarism rates among active-duty military and veterans, as well as voluntarism rates among military-connected students, more research and scholarship is needed in this area in order to further develop conclusions in this area of military social research (and how it can apply to

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<sup>158</sup> "Enlistment of youth in the Armed Forces : The Economics Daily." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Accessed December 03, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2006/feb/wk4/art01.htm>.

Also:

"Seniors Post-Secondary Plans and Scholarships Scholarships School Year 2013/2014." DoDEA.edu. Accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/research/upload/2014-Post-Secondary-Report.pdf>.

<sup>159</sup> Bowen, Gary L., James A. Martin, Jay A. Mancini, and John P. Nelson. "Research Brief: Civic Engagement and Sense of Community in the Military." Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families. Accessed December 3, 2017. <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Bowen-2001-IVMF-Research-Brief.pdf>.

the greater population in America). Further research relating to future proof of civic aptitude, possibly relating to test such as those administered to graduating high school students (like the AP Government exam), and comparing scores between military (possibly DoDEA students) compared to national averages, may prove to provide even more potential for further research relating to the impacts of military parenting. It should be noted that DoDEA schools have some other differences when compared to average American schools: DoDEA is funded directly through Congress, often resulting in higher per-pupil spending and higher teacher salaries.<sup>160</sup>

While the DoDEA schools are not representative of the school experience of every military-connected student in the nation, we may still be able to extrapolate some key insights into the civic benefits of military parenting through observing military life through the narrow scope of data from DoDEA schools. One potential suggestion would be for policy makers to encourage parental participation at their children(s) schools, and to encourage teachers to offer community-based volunteering options and opportunities for their students. This would not merely mean requiring students to do more community service hours, but rather to help facilitate community engagement by inviting community organizations, lawmakers, or other engaged community-based leaders to speak to the students about the impacts each student can make if they become involved. Another option is to offer state or federal tax incentives for parents who volunteer at their children(s) schools, or to work with employers to help encourage volunteerism as a way to offset

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<sup>160</sup> DoDEA. "Americas Educators (except Puerto Rico)." Special Education. Accessed July 04, 2018. <https://www.dodea.edu/Offices/HR/salary/ddess-educators.cfm>.



some traditional work hours (in a manner similar to how some military leaders offer “comp time” for those who volunteer at certain sanctioned events).

This suggestion is reflective of an often-quoted observation by Alexis de Tocqueville: “Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it.”<sup>161</sup> If parents are a major contributor to civic awareness in their children, then should be encouraged to be greater participants in their children’s civic educations. On the same note, if American engagement is dependent on active participation, then children should be given ample opportunity to engage in their communities as part of their civic education. While the military is an interesting subpopulation to study, some of their practices, such as encouragement of volunteering and the learning of songs and themes that reflect American patriotism, can be transferred to a civilian population. However, as this study found, even as soon as two years after a person leaves the military, the civic attitudes of their children tend to become more “civilian” than military. While further study could be dedicated to that veteran/military divide alone, it seems likely that the detachment from the discipline of military life, and/or the lack of support by employers to allow parents to volunteer, may impact the civic attitudes of children of veterans.

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<sup>161</sup> Crittenden, Jack, and Peter Levine. "Civic Education." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. December 27, 2007. Accessed July 04, 2018. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civic-education/>.

## CONCLUSION

U.S. education policy seems to be in a reactionary mode. The recent policy focus on the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects, while necessary to maintain a competitive edge in the world marketplace, has left other traditional core classes, like civics, by the educational wayside. When combined with other aspects, such as the growth of suburbia and the corollary decline in traditional forms of civic participation, both political scientists and lawmakers alike are correct to be concerned about the long-term impacts of civic illiteracy on the future of the American population.

While this paper did not set out to question the methods that should or should not be used with respect to civic education, it did attempt to challenge traditional scholarly attention to American subpopulations. Many standardized tests, including NAEP, tend to focus on breaking down respondents by focusing on parental responses to ethnic, socioeconomic and/or educational breakdowns, and then try to extrapolate data based on those results. This thesis tested that approach, asking researchers to consider whether studying a unique subset of the American population—the active-duty U.S. military—may offer unique insight into education (specifically, civics education), giving policymakers a unique perspective regarding potential avenues for future educational policy. Specifically, this thesis approached this topic by delineating civic virtue from citizenship-based education, arguing that civic virtue is needed in order to create a true interest in citizenship-based education. Since current education approaches tend to focus on “teaching to the test,” many American civilian students are learning citizenship by memorizing facts and figures, never understanding how they (as young citizens) can directly impact the very structure that they are studying for their class. Active-duty military students, on the

other hand, experience both the benefits of military community kinship, and the sacrifices they may experience while their loved one is on duty, raising awareness to the fact that freedom is not free and thereby increasing a sense of civic literacy.

The U.S. military subpopulation may be small, with the active-duty population only amounting to about 1 percent of the nation's total population, but their impact is felt across the world. Even though the active duty member is the one who takes the pledge to serve the country, military families also support the national mission, as well. Typical aspects of military family life include moving schools and/or jobs on a frequent basis.

While many social scientists have argued that this unique lifestyle can place a strain on the families (in particular, the children) of active-duty military, it can also be argued that the constant moving and changes can also create unique bonds within not only the singular military family units, but among the greater military community as a whole. In the words of an active duty military spouse: "Living in different places has allowed us to not only meet new people, it has given us the opportunity to make lifelong friends. It might be cliché to say we have a 'military family' but it is true. Friends we met during our first assignment have been our family the last three years, and we've experienced pregnancies, children, hardships and just plain life together."<sup>162</sup>

This thesis sought to study whether or not the children of active duty military (specifically, middle school students, which were classified as children enrolled in public, private or charter schools in grades 6-8) tend to have a greater sense of civic awareness and aptitude than their civilian counterparts. This thesis also challenged traditional norms

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<sup>162</sup> Bell, Amanda. "Here's the Hard Truth About Being a Military Wife." New York Post. July 26, 2017. Accessed July 05, 2018. <https://nypost.com/2016/05/06/5-things-you-never-realized-about-being-a-military-spouse/>.

with respect to how parental subgroups are delineated and studied in order to better understand national test results, like those found in the National Association for Education Progress' 2014 civics exams, but to encourage further scholarship with respect to how civic understandings may be impacted by active duty service by one or more of the children's parents.

What was quickly found in the development of this thesis is that there was very little existing scholarship with respect to this “angle” of the civilian/military divide. Many books and articles have been dedicated to understanding the volunteering and voting habits of active duty military, or the negative effects that are associated with the military-connected student lifestyle (such as suicide rates among military-connected students), but information that connected military-connected students with civic literacy was very difficult to find. Due to this lack of existing information, this researcher had to pull together concepts and studies and develop a new study in order to address the question that this thesis addressed. This survey did not delineate the attitudes of members/spouses of specific branches of the U.S. armed services (such as the Army, the Navy or the Air Force), but rather sought to gain universal attitudes of the active duty armed services as a whole.

The results of the survey were interesting, supporting the need for scholars to continue to address the civic knowledge angle of the “civilian/military divide.” What quickly became evident is that those polled in all cohorts— military, civilian and veteran— were highly politically engaged, higher than the levels expected at the outset of the survey. Whether this may signal the political awareness of the time in which this survey was con-

ducted (The timing of the survey coincided with some states' primary voting, so it is possible that civic awareness among all groups was at higher levels than during non-voting seasons), or if it was a reflection of civically-aware parents participating and less politically-aware parents abstaining, is worth noting.

One of the most interesting aspects of the study conducted for this thesis relates to an apparent divide between active duty military and veterans. Within most categories, relating to both civic knowledge and awareness, the results of both veterans and the children of veterans seemed more reflective of the civilian community results than they did the active duty military results (see Appendix A for study results). The survey classified "active duty military" as those who are currently serving, or have separated from active duty within two years, so it can be argued that social attitudes among those who have served tend to change once "civilianized" two or more years after leaving the military. This survey did not delineate either their ethnic origin, their veteran (war veteran or not) status, the number of years the veteran served, the means under which they were discharged/left the service (honorable discharge, dishonorable discharge, medical discharge, etcetera), or whether the veteran had been enlisted or an officer, so while it is not a true comparison of the Nesbit and Reinhold study, it does raise some interesting questions regarding the saliency of civic attitudes relating to subjects like volunteerism, suggesting the need for further scholarship in this area. Based on the results of the study for this project, "military" will be defined as active duty military, as the data associated with the active duty military offers a specific snapshot into a unique American community that is worth continuous focus and research, especially in regarding to civic awareness and education.

Throughout the interpretation of the results, two concepts become clear: despite the passion of the polled active duty military parents to vote, volunteer and ensure that their children understand concepts of civic importance (like learning the words of the National Anthem), the awareness of military children about civic involvement did not necessarily translate to more fact-based civic knowledge with respect to concepts like how long a U.S. senator will serve in office. The research study for this thesis found that the middle-school aged children of the active-duty military are more likely than their civilian counterparts to believe that volunteering is a civic duty, know the words to the National Anthem, and look toward military service in adulthood. When the parents of the middle schoolers were asked how important they believed civic education to be, active-duty military parents were also more likely to answer either “somewhat important” or “very important;” yet, more military children (14.29 percent) than civilian children (4.35 percent) answered that they are not likely to have conversations with their parents/guardians about government/politics.

The military may create a strong sub-culture that promotes traditional American mores, but there are other aspects to study that this research fell short of accomplishing. While the military promotes civic awareness through reminding the active duty to perform their civic duties (such as voting), and encouraging volunteerism by offering incentives for this positive civic behavior by noting it on the military member’s awards packages (which will help with possible promotions), it is unclear how other impacts, like higher rates of marriage and/or how having at least one consistent pay check per family while on active duty may impact these civic behaviors, may impact a family’s ability to participate within their communities. It is also unclear whether parents of active-duty

middle school students actively teach their children civics in a way that is different than their civilian counterparts, or if the more disciplined lifestyle of the military also relates to children being more disciplined in their studies, as well. It seems that, based on the known successes and failures of this thesis project, more research is necessary with respect to how the civically-minded teachings of the American military may (or may not) impact the civic understandings of their children.

While the study conducted for this thesis does not a true comparison against national fact-based knowledge tests like those conducted by the National Association for Educational Progress, it did find that the active-duty military community did seem to have a higher awareness, or potential for both civic literacy and citizenship-based knowledge, equating to positive behaviors like voting and volunteerism when compared against civilian populations. The data set for the study was small, and continued research will allow researchers to gather larger data sets, with more specific questions, that will help to gain even more clarity with respect to the potential “military/civilian divide” in civic education. By gaining a better understanding of how military parentage may positively affect civic dispositions of military-connected children, policy makers and teachers may be able to find better ways to increase community, and family, civic engagement in their students. In closing, it seems that parents who lead by example are an important component with respect to teaching children how to be good citizens. A parent who teaches their child how to participate within not only their family, but within their greater communities, teaches their child(ren) about the importance of concepts of an involved citizenry, creating positive example of civics in action. This active involvement makes it more likely that their child will maintain interest in learning citizenship-based knowledge

in their classrooms, as well. While military principles cannot be cut-and-pasted into American education policy, it is possible for schools and policymakers to take cues from the active-duty military lifestyle, such as working with employers to encourage volunteerism/participation by working parents and encouraging whole classrooms to volunteer in their communities as part of their curricula (instead of merely requiring service hours), in order to enrich their classrooms. Finally, it would be interesting to see what would happen if certain schools started to offer “civics refresher” courses for parents as a way to better understand concepts like the Electoral College— would they participate, or would they simply think that they were “too busy” to do so? Civics is a subject that requires more than just knowledge, but action— in other words, a citizen’s choice should reflect their commitment to American responsibility— so let us help to create that sense of action among all American students by offering opportunities to bring civics back into not only schools, but communities.



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## APPENDIX A- SURVEY RESULTS OF PARENTS

Results of “Civilian/Military Divide in Civic Education” Survey, by population. Survey dates: 22 Jun 2018— 27 Jun 2018

All respondents answered “Yes” when asked: “Are you the parent of a middle-school student, enrolled in a United States private, public, charter or Department of Defense Education Agency school (Grades 6-8)?”

Respondents self-identified as active-duty military (or separated within the past two years), or veteran. All other respondents are considered civilian.

Percentages were tabulated within their individual demographics.

Response rate:

Civilian: 27

Military: 8

Veteran: 5

Questions asked to parents of middle schoolers:

Q: What is your highest level of education?

<b>Response Options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>No high school diploma/GED</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>High school diploma/GED</b>	7.41%	37.50%	40.00%
<b>Associates degree</b>	11.11%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Bachelors degree</b>	40.74%	37.50%	20.00%
<b>Masters degree</b>	37.04%	12.50%	40.00%
<b>Other advanced degree (MD, JD, PhD, etc.)</b>	0.00%	12.50%	0.00%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%



Q: Are you married?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>Yes</b>	88.46%	100%	100%
<b>No</b>	11.54%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: How important do you consider civic education to be with respect to your child's education?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>Very unimportant</b>	18.52%	12.50%	0.00%
<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Neither unimportant nor important</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	14.81%	50.00%	75.00%
<b>Very important</b>	62.96%	37.50%	25.00%

Q: Do your children know the words to the American National Anthem?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>Yes</b>	88.89%	100%	60.00%
<b>No</b>	11.11%	0.00%	40.00%
<b>Don't know/prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: What are the names of the three branches of the United States government, based on the construct within the United States Constitution?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veteran
House, Senate and President	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%
Legislative, Judicial and Executive	96.30%	100%	80.00%
State, Local and National	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Legislatures, Congress and the Executive	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: What is the name of the document that is considered to be “The Supreme Law of the Land?”

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veteran
The U.S. Constitution	100%	100%	100%
The U.S. Supreme Court	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
The U.S. Congress	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
The Declaration of Independence	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: Who is the Speaker of the House right now (June, 2018)?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veteran
Rep. Nancy Pelosi	14.81%	0.00%	20.00%
Rep. John Boehner	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Rep. Paul Ryan	81.48%	100%	80.00%
Rep. Rand Paul	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: How important do you consider voting during presidential election years to be?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>Very unimportant</b>	14.81%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Neither unimportant nor important</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	0.00%	12.50%	40.00%
<b>Very important</b>	81.48%	87.50%	60.00%

Q: How important do you consider voting during midterm elections (non-presidential years, but when you still vote for Congress and other offices) to be?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>Very unimportant</b>	14.81%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Neither unimportant nor important</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	22.22%	37.50%	60.00%
<b>Very important</b>	59.26%	62.50%	40.00%

Q: Do you believe that volunteering is a civic responsibility?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veteran</b>
<b>Yes</b>	81.48%	100%	80.00%
<b>No</b>	18.52%	0.00%	20.00%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: On a scale from one to ten, with one being not important at all, and ten being extremely important, how do you rate your desire to teach your children about American civic responsibility (voting, volunteering within your community, appearing when summoned for jury duty, etc.)?

**Averages:**

Civilian: 9  
Military: 9  
Veterans: 8

Q: On a scale from one to ten, with one being not important at all, and ten being extremely important, how do you rate your desire to teach your children about United States holidays (Independence Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Presidents Day, Flag Day)?

**Averages:**

Civilian: 7.2  
Military: 7.6  
Veterans: 6.3

## **APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS OF MIDDLE-SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN**

Results of “Civilian/Military Divide in Civic Education” Survey, by population. Survey dates: 22 Jun 2018— 27 Jun 2018

All respondents answered “Yes” when asked: “Are you the parent of a middle-school student, enrolled in a United States private, public, charter or Department of Defense Education Agency school (Grades 6-8)?”

Respondents self-identified as active-duty military (or separated within the past two years), or veteran. All other respondents are considered civilian.

Percentages were tabulated within their individual demographics.

Response rate:

Civilian: 27

Military: 8

Veteran: 5

Q: How often are U.S. presidential elections held?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veterans</b>
<b>Every two years</b>	4.35%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Every four years</b>	95.65%	100%	50.00%
<b>Every six years</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Every eight years</b>	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%

Q: How long is one term of office for U.S. Senators?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>Civilian</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Veterans</b>
<b>Two years</b>	17.39%	28.57%	0.00%
<b>Four years</b>	17.39%	0.00%	25.00%
<b>Six years</b>	30.43%	28.57%	50.00%
<b>Eight years</b>	4.35%	42.86%	0.00%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	30.43%	0.00%	25.00%

Q: Are U.S. Supreme Court justices chosen by popular election?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	17.39%	28.57%	25.00%
No	69.57%	71.43%	25.00%
Prefer not to answer	13.04%	0.00%	50.00%

Q: What famous document starts with “We, the People. . .”?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
The Declaration of Independence	69.57%	28.57%	50.00%
The Treaty of Versailles	4.35%	0.00%	0.00%
The U.S. Constitution	21.74%	71.43%	50.00%
Prefer not to answer	4.35%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: Would you consider joining the military someday?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	26.09%	71.43%	50.00%
No	69.57%	14.29%	25.00%
Prefer not to answer	4.35%	14.29%	25.00%

Q: Do you find your civics/government classes to be interesting?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	65.22%	57.14%	50.00%
No	30.43%	42.86%	50.00%

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Prefer not to answer	4.35%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: Do you think that voting is an important duty for American adults?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	95.65%	100%	75.00%
No	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%
Prefer not to answer	4.35%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: Have you ever written or emailed an elected official?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	8.70%	14.29%	0.00%
No	91.30%	85.71%	100%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Q: Have you/ do you plan on participating with student government/council at your school?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	34.78%	57.14%	25.00%
No	56.52%	28.57%	25.00%
Prefer not to answer	8.70%	14.29%	50.00%

Q: Do you have conversations with your guardians/parents about government and/or politics?

Response options	Civilian	Military	Veterans
Yes	95.65%	85.71%	75.00%
No	4.35%	14.29%	25.00%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

## APPENDIX C: SURVEY RESULTS AMONG TOTAL POPULATION— PARENTS

Results of “Civilian/Military Divide in Civic Education” Survey, by population. Survey dates: 22 Jun 2018— 27 Jun 2018

All respondents answered “Yes” when asked: “Are you the parent of a middle-school student, enrolled in a United States private, public, charter or Department of Defense Education Agency school (Grades 6-8)?”

Response rate:  
TOTAL: 45

Questions asked to parents of middle schoolers:

Q: What is your highest level of education?

<b>Response Options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>No high school diploma/GED</b>	0.00%
<b>High school diploma/GED</b>	20.00%
<b>Associates degree</b>	6.67%
<b>Bachelors degree</b>	37.76%
<b>Masters degree</b>	31.11%
<b>Other advanced degree (MD, JD, PhD, etc.)</b>	2.22%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	2.22%

Q: Are you, or your spouse, currently (or separated within two years) on active duty?

<b>Response Options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Yes</b>	28.89%
<b>No</b>	71.11%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%



Q: Are you, or your spouse, a veteran of the U.S. armed services?

<b>Response Options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Yes</b>	22.22%
<b>No</b>	77.78%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: Are you married?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Yes</b>	93.18%
<b>No</b>	6.82%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: How important do you consider civic education to be with respect to your child's education?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Very unimportant</b>	13.64%
<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	2.27%
<b>Neither unimportant nor important</b>	0.00%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	27.27%
<b>Very important</b>	56.82%

Q: Do your children know the words to the American National Anthem?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Yes</b>	88.89%
<b>No</b>	11.11%
<b>Don't know/prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: What are the names of the three branches of the United States government, based on the construct within the United States Constitution?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>House, Senate and President</b>	4.44%
<b>Legislative, Judicial and Executive</b>	91.11%
<b>State, Local and National</b>	0.00%
<b>Legislatures, Congress and the Executive</b>	4.44%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: What is the name of the document that is considered to be “The Supreme Law of the Land?”

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>The U.S. Constitution</b>	100%
<b>The U.S. Supreme Court</b>	0.00%
<b>The U.S. Congress</b>	0.00%
<b>The Declaration of Independence</b>	0.00%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: Who is the Speaker of the House right now (June, 2018)?

<b>Response option</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Rep. Nancy Pelosi</b>	11.11%
<b>Rep. John Boehner</b>	0.00%
<b>Rep. Paul Ryan</b>	84.44%
<b>Rep. Rand Paul</b>	4.44%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: How important do you consider voting during presidential election years to be?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Very unimportant</b>	8.89%
<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	2.22%
<b>Neither unimportant nor important</b>	0.00%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	11.11%
<b>Very important</b>	77.78%

Q: How important do you consider voting during midterm elections (non-presidential years, but when you still vote for Congress and other offices) to be?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Very unimportant</b>	8.89%
<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	2.22%
<b>Neither unimportant nor important</b>	0.00%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	31.11%
<b>Very important</b>	57.78%

Q: Do you believe that volunteering is a civic responsibility?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
<b>Yes</b>	84.44%
<b>No</b>	15.56%
<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	0.00%

Q: On a scale from one to ten, with one being not important at all, and ten being extremely important, how do you rate your desire to teach your children about American civic responsibility (voting, volunteering within your community, appearing when summoned for jury duty, etc.)?

**Averages:**

TOTAL: 9

Q: On a scale from one to ten, with one being not important at all, and ten being extremely important, how do you rate your desire to teach your children about United States holidays (Independence Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Presidents Day, Flag Day)?

**Averages:**

TOTAL: 7.4

## APPENDIX D: SURVEY RESULTS AMONG TOTAL POPULATION—CHILDREN

All respondents answered “Yes” when asked: “Are you the parent of a middle-school student, enrolled in a United States private, public, charter or Department of Defense Education Agency school (Grades 6-8)?”

Response rate:  
TOTAL: 36

Q: How often are U.S. presidential elections held?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
Every two years	2.78%
Every four years	91.67%
Every six years	0.00%
Every eight years	2.78%
Prefer not to answer	2.78%

Q: How long is one term of office for U.S. Senators?

<b>Response options</b>	<b>All Responses</b>
Two years	22.22%
Four years	13.89%
Six years	30.56%
Eight years	11.11%
Prefer not to answer	22.22%

Q: Are U.S. Supreme Court justices chosen by popular election?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	19.44%
No	66.67%
Prefer not to answer	13.89%

Q: What famous document starts with “We, the People. . .”?

Response options	All Responses
The Declaration of Independence	61.11%
The Treaty of Versailles	2.78%
The U.S. Constitution	33.33%
Prefer not to answer	2.78%

Q: Would you consider joining the military someday?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	38.89%
No	50.00%
Prefer not to answer	11.111%

Q: Do you find your civics/government classes to be interesting?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	63.89%
No	33.33%
Prefer not to answer	2.78%

Q: Do you think that voting is an important duty for American adults?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	94.44%
No	2.78%
Prefer not to answer	2.78%

Q: Have you ever written or emailed an elected official?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	8.33%
No	91.67%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%

Q: Have you/ do you plan on participating with student government/council at your school?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	36.11%
No	50.00%
Prefer not to answer	13.89%

Q: Do you have conversations with your guardians/parents about government and/or politics?

Response options	All Responses
Yes	91.67%
No	8.33%
Prefer not to answer	0.00%

# Curriculum Vitae

**Allison Suerdieck**

Master of Arts in Government Candidate  
Johns Hopkins University

## EDUCATION

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### **Johns Hopkins University Krieger School of Arts and Science, 2017-2018**

- Master of Arts in Government. Graduation date: August 2018
- Thesis title: "Is there a Military/Civilian Divide in American Civic Education?"

### **University of Nevada, Reno, 1999-2002**

- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (Cum Laude) with a Minor in Philosophy.
- Thesis title: "The Philosophies Behind the U.S. Constitution"

### **University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 2001**

- National Student Exchange Program

## EXPERIENCE

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### **Historian, U.S. Air Force Space Command (AFSPC), 2018-Current**

- Assists Command Historian in compiling data and relevant information for annual histories on behalf of AFSPC.
- Researched, managed and strategized the successful implementation of the 2018 Space and Missile Pioneers Award for AFSPC, the 2018 Bernard A. Schriever Memorial Essay Contest for AFSPC, and the annual AFSPC Lecture Series.

### **Owner/Manager of Reflections by Rosie, LLC, 2011-2017**

- Managed and strategized the growth of my photography business, Reflections by Rosie, LLC, based on proven customer service strategies and providing products and communication that consistently met the needs of clients.
- Researched, wrote, and edited three self-published books on different aspects of photography.
- Published written articles to nationally-recognized blogs, FacebookLive, and web-based seminar formats, mentoring and educating hundreds of photographers.

### **Legislative Assistant, U.S. Congressman Jon C. Porter (NV-3), 2004-2005**

- Managed a portfolio based on energy, crime, natural resources, and animal welfare.
- Tracked hundreds of bills in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate in order to ensure timely communication with both Congressman Porter and his constituents.



**Intern (2002) to Legislative Aide (2004), U.S. Senator John Ensign (NV), 2002-2004**

- Legislative Aide: Managed a portfolio including animal welfare, environment and energy, as well as small business issues, on behalf of Senator Ensign.
- Senior Legislative Correspondent: Managed team of 5 Legislative Correspondents and reduced average constituent communication time down from 1 month to 2 weeks.
- Legislative Correspondent: Responded to constituents on behalf of Senator through a portfolio focused on animal welfare, energy, environment and technology issues.
- Intern: Rapidly learned the legislative process on a hands-on basis to assist congressional staff on constituent affairs.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

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**Key Spouse Mentor, Air Force Life Cycle Management, 2015-Current**

- Managed 3 Key Spouses and ensured that military families were supported in the event of emergencies, the birth of babies, or during deployments.

**6th Grade Catechism Teacher, St. Benedicts Catholic Church of Falcon, Colorado, 2016-Current**

- Taught/mentored students regarding the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church ahead of their Confirmations.

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

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**Peterson Toastmasters Club #5316**

- Current Advanced Communicator Silver and Advanced Leader Bronze
- President, 2017-2018: Led Peterson Toastmasters to earn the title of Presidents Distinguished, the highest level of recognition available.
- Pathways Guide, 2018: Represented District 26 on the rollout of the brand-new education program, Pathways. Successfully led 5 Clubs through the Pathways transition.
- Vice President of Marketing, 2016-2017: Strategized Peterson Toastmaster's presence on social media, significantly increasing guest and new member interest in Peterson Toastmasters.